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MARCH 2021 #198



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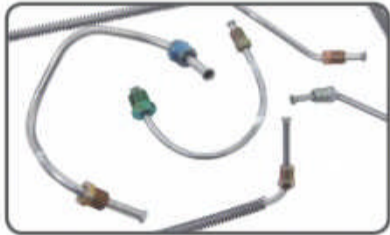


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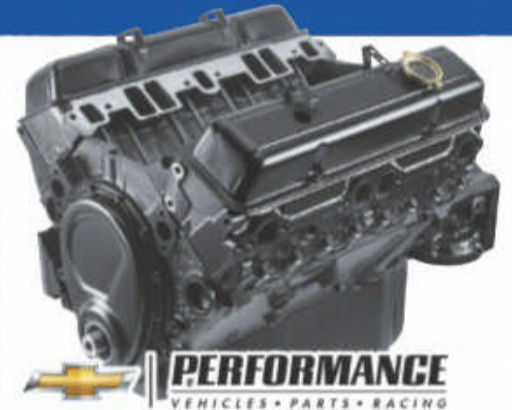


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Sampling the Standard

In assembling our issue this month with a spotlight on Cadillac, I had plenty of opportunity to reflect on what the storied brand has meant to me through the years. When I was a young kid in the '70s, Cadillac still maintained its status as one of the most aspirational automobiles in America, even as premium European makes like Mercedes gained ground. There was just something special about a Cadillac.

I got my first real dose of what made GM's top-tier cars stand apart when my uncle purchased a slightly used 1975 Coupe de Ville when I was about 8 or 9 years old. I was already infatuated with cars of all types, and well aware of the status of the Cadillac – it was a big deal in my family when he brought that car home. His was among the last of the really big Caddies, seeming gargantuan, even among other cars of the '70s.

I well recall that day my uncle pulled up to our house after taking delivery, he and my father then engaging in that bygone American tradition of standing around the new (to him as least) car with the hood up, soon drawing in a few of the neighbors. The vastness of the engine bay was noted by all, with talk then turning to the massive 500-cubic-inch V-8.

My first ride in that car made an immediate impression. It was nearly silent once the vault-like doors were closed. This was then a late-model, so it functioned just as intended, its factory-installed exhaust system dampening any hint of the usual pulsations generated by a V-8 – a faint hum was all that occupants would hear as the car accelerated. Luxury in a car of that time meant not having to be aware of what was moving you forth, and to that end, even the transmission shifting was nearly imperceptible – the car simply motivated itself forward when the big, metal-trimmed gas pedal was pushed.

But it was the ride quality that most set it apart from any other car I'd yet experienced at that point in my young life. In addition to being largely isolated from mechanical noises and vibrations, imperfections in the pavement were mostly absorbed – only significant bumps could be detected by passengers, and even those were diminished. The car truly did seem to float down the road in a way that seemed magical at the time.

As I got older and started working on cars in my teens, I would occasionally encounter a Cadillac, and it was always immediately apparent that those pre-'77 models were not like any other GM car of their respective time. Massive frames with large control arms up front and long trailing

arms in the rear, heavy-duty everything, and lots of bits and pieces you just wouldn't find on an Impala, or even a Buick Electra. Even subtle little details, like the operation of the door handles, or the ignition lock cylinder in the steering column, seemed to function more smoothly and positively than similar parts from other GM cars.

While I was in high school, a friend bought a low-mileage '70 Sedan de Ville that, in spite of being 15 years old by then, still provided the Cadillac experience on the road. In helping him install an aftermarket stereo, I was astounded by all the various forms of sound deadening material I encountered while mounting new speakers and running the wiring. When the music finally flowed forth, the well-sealed cabin seemed to help the acoustical quality of the new sound system – we could ride around, lounging in the plush seats and sampling our favorite albums with the same relaxing solitude that formerly required someone's home stereo and a living room.

Later, I owned a Cadillac of my own, a 1973 Coupe de Ville that still looked great with its Harvest Yellow paint and white leather upholstery and vinyl top. It, too, provided quiet comfort for the long drives back and forth to college for a couple years, before I had to give it up for something a lot smaller and more economical – Cadillac ownership was not well suited to starving students.

By the mid-'80s, Cadillacs had shrunk significantly from their mid-'70s dimensional zenith, and many had front-wheel drive, which seemed a sort of sacrilege at the time. I was disappointed when a friend's father bought a brand-new 1986 front-driver, choosing it over the rear-drive Lincoln Mark VII we tried to get him to pop for. Yet, when I got to drive it, I was immediately taken back to the familiar sensations provided by its larger forebearers. I had to hand it to the Cadillac engineers.

In more recent years, I've been thrilled to see the Cadillac crest on newer models that again turn heads and reward their occupants with luxurious trappings and, in the case of the V-spec cars I tend to admire most, outstanding performance.

So, as we pay homage to the marque once famously heralded as "The Standard of the World," I've been reminded of what made these cars stand apart, and even a bit inspired to sample that dedication to absolute luxury all over again. A distinctive motoring experience, for sure. 🏎️



The car truly

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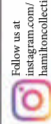
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Donation to National Corvette Museum Honors Vietnam Vets

THE NATIONAL CORVETTE MUSEUM HAS ANNOUNCED THE DONATION OF A 1970

Corvette by a Vietnam veteran, to honor all Vietnam veterans. "Between 1954 and 1975, around 2.7-million Americans served in the Vietnam War," shares Derek Moore, the museum's curator. "Approximately 600,000 of those Vietnam War veterans are still alive today. Dr. Harry and Anne Rumzek approached us to donate their Monza Red 1970 Corvette in honor of Vietnam veterans."

Major Harold Rumzek served in the USAF from 1959 to 1979. The highly decorated veteran saw 158 combat missions and, in 1970, he purchased the brand-new Corvette. The first of many memories forged during his half century of ownership was a 399-mile trek across Nevada to Reno — in four hours. "I went through 10 towns where the speed limit was 25 mph, so I had to make sure I went from 125 back down to 25!"

Over the years, Harry took laps at Texas Motor Speedway with the 'Vette, and did some drag racing and autocross events. The 1970 Stingray was also in the Motorama II, celebrating GM's 100th anniversary. A true Corvette man, Harry is in the Museum's Duntov and Spire Societies, and is a member of Cowtown Vettes, where he was Texas Motor Speedway Coordinator. He's also a National Council of Corvette Clubs Life Member.

"It's an honor having my car here," says Harry. "I lost over 100 friends in the military — 55 to 60 in Vietnam. I'd rather have it here at the Museum, honoring these guys."

The National Corvette Museum is in Bowling Green, Kentucky. For more information, visit corvettemuseum.org.

The Henry Ford Digitization Project Hits a Milestone

THE HENRY FORD HAS ANNOUNCED A MILESTONE IN ITS MASSIVE EFFORT TO DIGITIZE the foundation's enormous collection of artifacts. In November, the museum scanned its 100,000th artifact, a photograph of the 100,000th Fordson Tractor. To celebrate, The Henry Ford has been giving guests behind-the-scenes looks at the digitization process.

"If you've visited our website, read a blog post, shared a social media story from our channels, or simply walked through the museum, you've encountered the work of our digitization team," says Patricia Mooradian, president and CEO, The Henry Ford. "Digitization has opened our doors to guests far beyond what we could have ever imagined. People can now view the Rosa Parks bus, the Wright Cycle Shop, or Edison's Menlo Park Laboratory from anywhere in the world, at any time they choose."

The process is very detailed, requiring many steps such as cleaning, special handling, or other extensive treatments before digitization. Artifacts will either be photographed or scanned while the curatorial team drafts a summary, giving an overview of the artifact's significance. When completed, each item is catalogued in the Digital Collections for viewing. With more than 26-million artifacts in the collection, expect many more milestones over the coming years.

If you are interested in knowing more about The Henry Ford or donating to its causes, visit thehenryford.org.



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ITEM 60363/69730 shown

ITEM 69727/68121 CALIFORNIA ONLY

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SUPER COUPON

HaulMaster ★★★★★ (5547)

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\$29.99 ~~\$19.99~~
Save 61%

Compare to Neocraft 60635 \$51.45

ITEM 62515/66911 shown

28914091 LIMIT 3 - Exp. 2/19/21*

Brooks Stevens Lincoln

IT'S NOT EXACTLY CORRECT TO SAY THAT THE BROOKS STEVENS Lincoln Continental has been found—the car has never been hidden away or lost track of. But, an integral part of the Continental recently reunited with it: the Brooks Stevens connection.

According to Todd Lockwood, he and his father, Carter Lockwood, always knew of the Continental as Henry Uihlein II's car. "Carter was in his early 20s when the Lincoln first arrived in Lake Placid, New York, with then-owner George Holley. Every summer, he saw the car cruising around Lake Placid. In the early 1950s, Holley sold the Lincoln to Henry Uihlein II, who had made Lake Placid his new year-round home."

Not until 1954 did Uihlein ship the Continental off to Stevens to have the Milwaukee-based industrial designer apply his touches to it. Carter Lockwood, however, only knew that the Continental had left town and later came back painted a different color. Regardless, he longed to buy the car off Uihlein.

Uihlein, for his part, drove the Continental regularly and eventually slipped in a Cadillac 331-cu.in. V-8 and Hydra-Matic transmission to make it easier to service. Not until 1997, when Uihlein died at the age of 101, did Carter Lockwood finally get his chance to buy the car. By that time, according to Todd, Carter could no longer drive, but he bought the car anyway and restored it with Todd. "We liked the car's two-tone paint scheme, but had no idea where it came from."

The answer came in a 2017 *Hemmings Daily* article (see HMN.com/LoewyStevensWright) that compared the Stevens/Uihlein Continental to the ones modified by Raymond Loewy and Frank Lloyd Wright—an article that allowed Todd to recently complete the car's history and that allowed us to determine the modern-day whereabouts of the car.



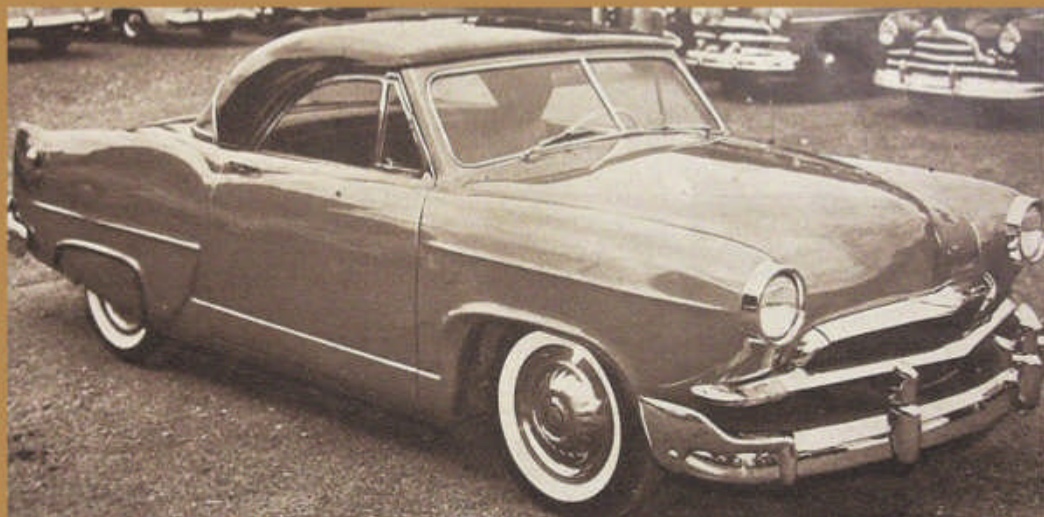
J in the Wind

IF THE POINT OF CUSTOMIZING WAS TO BUILD SOMETHING LONG AND LOW, then the Henry J represented a deficit that most customizers opted not to start with. Ed Roth reportedly had one, and a few others popped up here and there in the 1950s, including the one that James E. Hare of Cumberland, Maryland, built sometime before September 1954.

That's when his appeared briefly in *Motor Trend*, along with a rundown of the modifications he made to it: Plymouth cowl and windshield, Nash dash, 1951 Ford hood reconfigured as a rear deck, 1951 Chevrolet Bel Air top and bumpers, extended quarter panels, lowered suspension, and 15-coat red-and-black lacquer paint.

And that's about all that anybody seems to know about it. It appeared at least one other Henry J custom took Hare's cue of replacing the fastback with a Ford hood, but Hare's Henry J disappeared from the limelight afterward.

Ron Johnson of La Harpe, Illinois, however, would like to know more about the smart little custom. What did Hare use to power it? Did he keep it in that configuration? And whatever became of it?




RE: A Great Notion

THERE'S NO WORD ON THE BACKSTORY TO THE CAR that Ken Reiger photographed in the late 1960s in the Pacific Northwest (see *HCC* #196, January 2021), but we've had a number of you write in to identify some of the parts used in that amalgamation.

Larry Foster believes the main body is a Morris Minor with a grafted-on roof—a supposition backed up by the Minor wheel cover he also identified. Front fenders are likely Studebaker, he said, while the rears could have come from a Chevrolet pickup.

Gavin A. concurred on the Studebaker front fenders, though he posited that the body shell is circa-1940s GM, the door skins came from a similar-era Cadillac, and the rear end—perhaps the entire chassis—came from a late 1960s Volkswagen.

 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 blog.hemmings.com/index.php/category/lost-and-found.



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MECUM

Mecum Madness

THERE WAS NO SHORTAGE OF AUCTIONS AT MECUM THIS PAST MONTH, with three events taking place. The venues included Indianapolis, Las Vegas, and Kansas City, and highlighted vehicles of all eras. The three auction events saw a total of more than \$33 million in sales with a 76-percent sell-through. In total, 1,000 cars and vehicles changed hands, and among those to sell was this 1957 Cadillac Eldorado Biarritz convertible. Part of the Etzel Family Collection, sold at the Kansas City Auction, the Biarritz was one of 1,800 produced and featured a 365-cu.in. V-8 mated to an automatic transmission. The car had undergone a complete body and drivetrain restoration, and came with factory air conditioning, wide whitewall tires, and parade boot. The Cadillac sold for a fee-inclusive \$110,000.

One of the highlights of the Indianapolis show was a collection of eight cars featured in the television series *Fargo*. The models ranged from a 1939 Plymouth sedan to a 1950 Chrysler Royal, and were peppered throughout the show's fourth season this past fall. The collection sold for a grand total of \$70,400, with the top sale being a 1949 Cadillac Series 62 Special sedan, used by Chris Rock's character in the series; it brought \$13,200.

Jumping out at us in Las Vegas was this 1956 Ford Thunderbird, finished in rare and correct Ford Sunset Coral with black-and-white interior. The 'Bird was powered by a 312 V-8 with Ford-O-Matic transmission and featured power steering and brakes. It had a black soft-top, rear fender shields, original-style Firestone whitewalls, and proper labels/stickers in the highly detailed engine compartment. The well-detailed Thunderbird found a new owner for \$36,300. This is a small sampling of what sold at Mecum—for complete results, visit mecum.com.

AUCTION PROFILE

CAR	1939 Cadillac Series 90
AUCTIONEER	Mecum
LOCATION	Las Vegas, Nevada
DATE	November 14, 2020
LOT NUMBER	S157
RESERVE	None
AVERAGE SELLING PRICE	\$64,000
SELLING PRICE	\$68,200

MINIMAL CHANGES WERE MADE TO THE 1939 SERIES 39-90, SUCH AS the addition of chrome strips to the running-board edges and fully chromed spears on the fender skirts and hood. Other subtle differences can be seen in the taillamps and bumpers. The V-16 era was coming to a close for Cadillac and the 1939

RM Sotheby's Open Roads Concludes

RM SOTHEBY'S HAS ANNOUNCED THE FINAL SALES RESULTS FROM its latest online only "Open Roads" Auction, which took place over 10 days in November. More than \$5 million in sales was realized with American classics making up a chunk of the listings. This segment of cars had a 61.5-percent sell through with final sales eclipsing \$800,000.

One example was a 1952 Muntz Jet, which was a part of the Petersen Automotive Vault Collection. The Muntz grows rarer as the years carry on, and this example was one of just 198 produced. Only two are said to be equipped with a Chrysler Hemi engine, and this was one of them. The FirePower Hemi V-8 was backed with an automatic transmission and the Jet's bidding took off to a final sale of \$69,300.

Another less common example of American engineering to be sold was a 1915 Lozier Type 82 seven-passenger touring car. Said to be the only known survivor, it remained complete with the original body, chassis, engine, and most hardware. It was a part of the Barney Pollard collection and was fully restored 20 years ago, winning an AACA National First Prize in 2003; it was shown at the Amelia Island Concours d'Elegance the next year. It was most recently on display in Plattsburgh, New York, at the Champlain

Valley Transportation Museum. The CCCA-eligible tourer sold for \$110,000 with fees. Final results from the auction are now available at rmsothebys.com.



RM SOTHEBY'S



MECUM

models were available for factory prices ranging from \$5,315 to \$7,295 for the Town Car.

This Cadillac was said to be one of 136 V-16s made in 1939. It had CCCA Full Classic status and was fitted with many features including woodgrain interior window surrounds, banjo steering wheel, dual sidemount spares, bumper guards, wide whitewall tires, and fully carpeted trunk. In newly refreshed black paint with gray fabric interior, this Cadillac was a great example of the end of the company's V-16 era.

MARCH

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Please note that these events are active as of press time despite the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. We recommend you verify the status before making plans to attend.

Up Next

THREE AUCTIONS ARE CONFIRMED FOR THE Amelia Island Concours d'Elegance weekend scheduled for March 4-7 in Amelia Island, Florida. Be sure to check with each auction house for details on social-distancing guidelines, consignments, bidding procedures, and attendance regulations. RM Sotheby's is the official auction house of the show and Bonhams, along with Russo and Steele, will be back again this year. G. Potter King has moved its typical February event back to March 11-13 in Atlantic City, New Jersey, and Mecum has begun accepting consignments for its annual Glendale, Arizona, auction. Look for centralized coverage at hemmings.com/stories.



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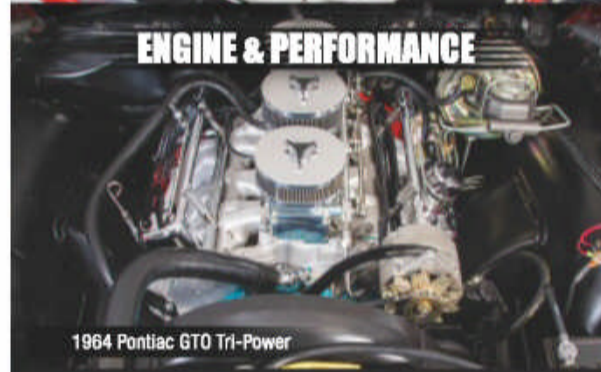
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Citroën's otherworldly DS, famed for its aerodynamic lines and hydropneumatic suspension, made a surprisingly effective front-wheel-drive flatbed truck, as proven by Application des Procédés Tissier founder Pierre Tissier. The DS Tissier Plateau Porte Auto got a radical body chop and multiple rear axles mounting 10-inch rear wheels, and it's been modeled in generous 1:18 scale by Classic Model Replicars. This distinctive French flatbed is available in two color schemes: *Bleu et Rouge* (Blue and Red, item CMR138BR) and *Rouge* (Red, item CMR138RR). While it lacks opening panels, it's beautifully detailed outside and in, with legible gauges, crisp diamond-plate treads, and separate aluminum ramps so another 1:18 model can be "driven" on.



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to be sure this car is on the right page, I ask that you give me a minute to explain before I hear the clickity-clack of keyboards from coast to coast.

Some cars are underdogs because no one wanted them then, and now everyone wants one. Some are underdogs because everyone wanted them then, and now no one wants one. Others are underdogs because everyone dreamed of having one then, but when they finally attain their dream of ownership, they find themselves with a money pit that no mechanic will touch. And then, there are the underdogs whose values, compared to similar cars, have either fallen flat or just fallen.

The Rolls-Royce Silver Shadow actually falls into two of the above categories, and I was as surprised as many of you probably are.

Nearly a decade ago, I attended an invitational for a nationwide multi-make car club in Michigan. I expected to see a lot of Detroit iron at this event, but to my surprise, around 25 percent of the

attendees arrived in a Rolls-Royce. Of those, half were Silver Shadows. My first thought was that a state going through a rough economic patch was filled with some very wealthy people. I soon learned that most of these Silver Shadows were purchased for less than I paid for my Hudson Jet Liner, which I had driven from Baltimore to Michigan in one day. The Rolls guys said they wouldn't attempt that in their *Dynasty*-era conveyances.

Why? Hydraulics. What?

A few months ago, I was following a post on a Facebook page for a 1977 Rolls-Royce Silver Shadow II, and all the warnings from everyone about considering the car as an addition to their corral included the word "hydraulics" more than a dozen times.

According to a page devoted solely to the Rolls-Royce Silver Shadow:

"The hydraulic system of the Rolls-Royce Silver Shadow is a very ingenious, safe, complex but also a vulnerable system. When there are no faults nor malfunctions, it is a very comfortable

and masterly mechanism. However, most Silver Shadow owners have stories about faults and repairs on the system."

I studied the material provided, and it just seemed like a chronic headache waiting for a moment to flare up.

With some luxury cars, the electrical accessories can be problematic. That is why when most car guys bemoan an automobile's lack of power windows, seats, and locks, I roll my eyes. I think back to my father's first car with these features and the trouble he had with them from the beginning. I can't imagine the problems that would present in a 50-year-old car. I'll crank my windows, thank you.

The Rolls-Royce Silver Shadow was produced from 1965 to 1976 and the Silver Shadow II from 1977 to 1980. It was the first Rolls-Royce to feature unitized construction.

Responding to criticism that Rolls-Royces were antiquated both stylistically and in regard to engineering, the Silver Shadow was designed to be more conducive to the needs of the drivers at the

time—mainly to create a car that could navigate narrower streets, for city driving and regular commuting, without sacrificing interior space and ultimate comfort. The interior was actually more commodious than the Silver Cloud.

While styling finally advanced forward of the bulging fenders of the Silver Cloud, the upright grille firmly established the Silver Shadow as a true Rolls-Royce, nonetheless. Once the Lincoln Continental Mark III debuted with its own take on the upright grille, even that feature became somewhat passé. It seems just about every make offered at least one car with a Rolls-Royce-inspired upright grille in the 1970s.

Disc brakes replaced drums, and an independent rear suspension took the place of a live axle. In 1977, rack-and-pinion steering enabled more positive road feel.

Silver Shadows were motivated by V-8s of more than 6.2 liters. Left-hand-drive models used GM's TH400 automatic transmission.

Through 1968, the hydraulic suspension leveling system operated at all four corners. Deeming it unnecessary up front, beginning in 1969, it only brought up the rear.

Soon, there were coupes and convertibles. I saw a white Silver Shadow convertible with a red leather interior at a car show in the early 1980s. It came equipped with a full bar, including crystal decanters. My Plymouth at the time didn't even have cupholders.

From what I gathered, if you want a Rolls-Royce Silver Shadow, find one from the family of the original owner. Make sure it has been maintained by a qualified mechanic and comes with meticulous service records. Check the hydraulics. If you find one needing TLC, buy a lottery ticket and hope for the best.

The asking prices on Silver Shadows at the time I write this are all over the map, ranging from \$1,000 to \$90,000. At first glance, they look wonderful, but what are they really worth?

According to popular value guides, a 1974 Silver Shadow's value ranges from \$5,200 to \$31,000, depending on condition. So, midrange would be around \$15,000? That is still low for high-end luxury car. For a 1978 Silver Shadow II, the values range from \$6,200 to \$33,500, so let's say a midrange of \$16,000.

Recently, I saw a pristine, one-owner Chevette go for \$9,500. That should tell you everything.

Now, you can write the editor and demand I be sent to a rest home. 🐞



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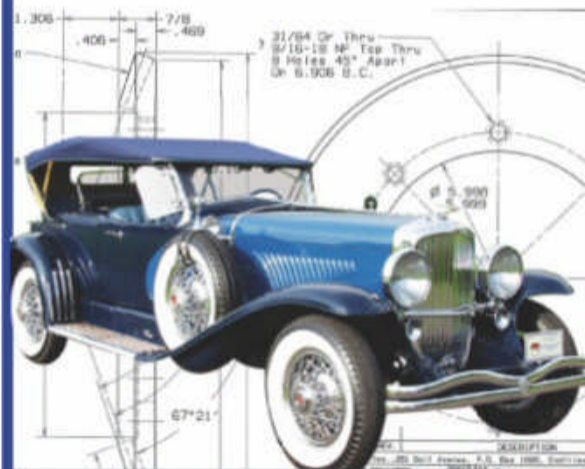
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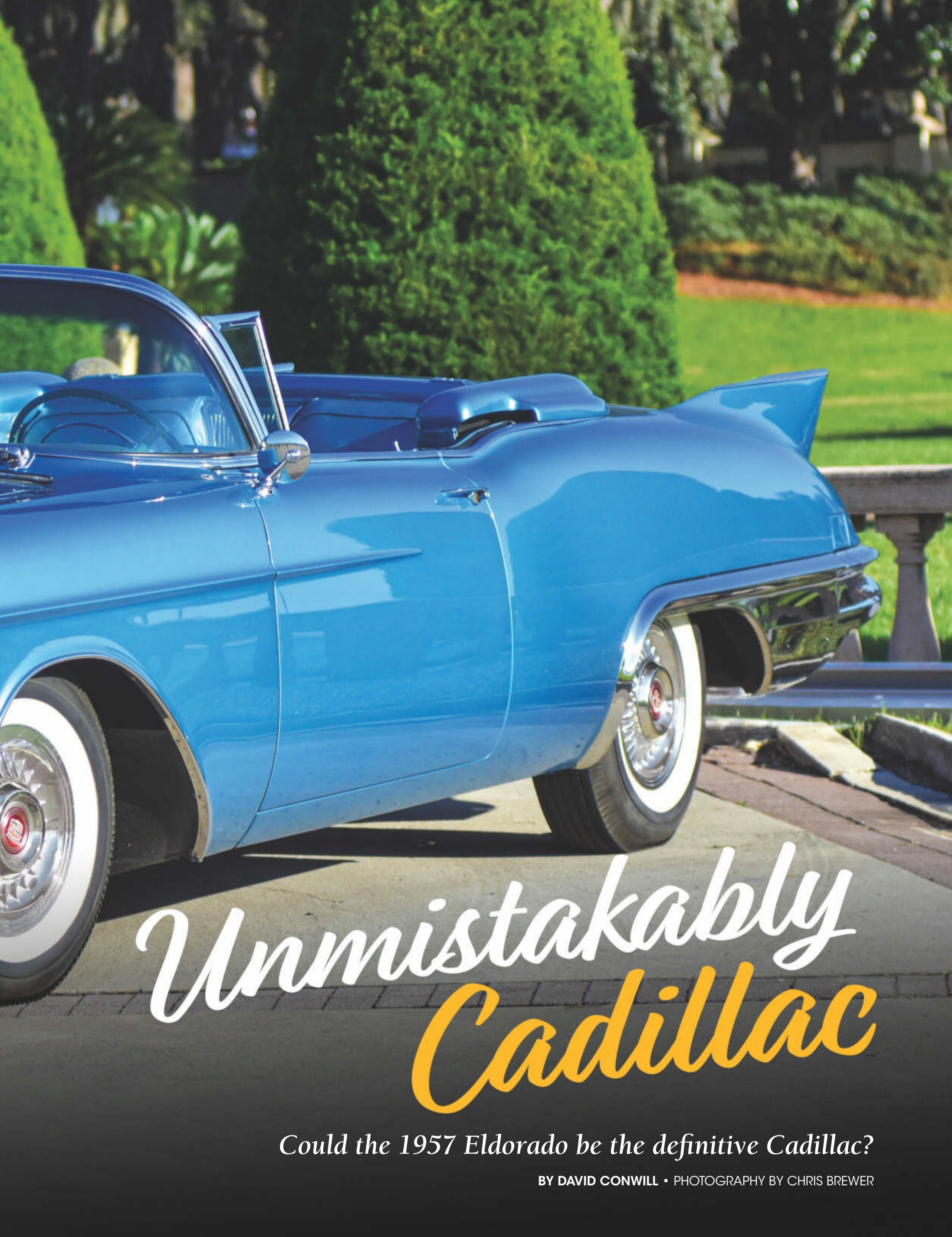
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spotlight
cadillac classics





*Unmistakably
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Could the 1957 Eldorado be the definitive Cadillac?

BY DAVID CONWILL • PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHRIS BREWER



A pair of Carter WCFB four-barrel carburetors lurk under that triangular “bat-wing” air cleaner. They feed a 325-hp, 365-cu.in. edition of Cadillac’s famed first-generation OHV V-8. A single four-barrel, and 300 hp, was standard on the rest of the Cadillac line.

“It Gives a Man a New Outlook...” promised General Motors about the view through the windshield of a 1957 Cadillac. That’s because, if you could pony up the \$7,286 base price of an Eldorado (which was the same whether you purchased a convertible or hardtop, and is equivalent to over \$67,000 today), plus more for your desired options, you had certainly made your place in the world. The expansive hood and finned fender-top ornaments were your visual confirmation of that status. Outside, the distinctive shark-like tailfins, massive cast-aluminum rear bumpers, and the rest of the quasi-custom coachwork made certain other drivers knew it, too.

It’s no secret that the Great Depression had been hard on the market for luxury cars. Unfettered ostentation was badly out of

style in the 1930s and ’40s, and the traditional star players like Packard, Peerless, and Pierce-Arrow fell by the wayside. Either they cheapened their products to survive or they didn’t survive at all.

Cadillac had no such worries. Buoyed by the rest of the GM lineup, the marque could continue to focus on pure luxury. If scale was reduced, so be it, that’s why there were other, less expensive makes in the corporate portfolio.

When the economy revved up in the 1950s and flamboyance came back into vogue, it was Cadillac, Lincoln, and Chrysler that now contended for the rich and powerful car buyer. It wasn’t much of a contest, though—Cadillac was always on top. Cars like the Eldorado were the reason why.

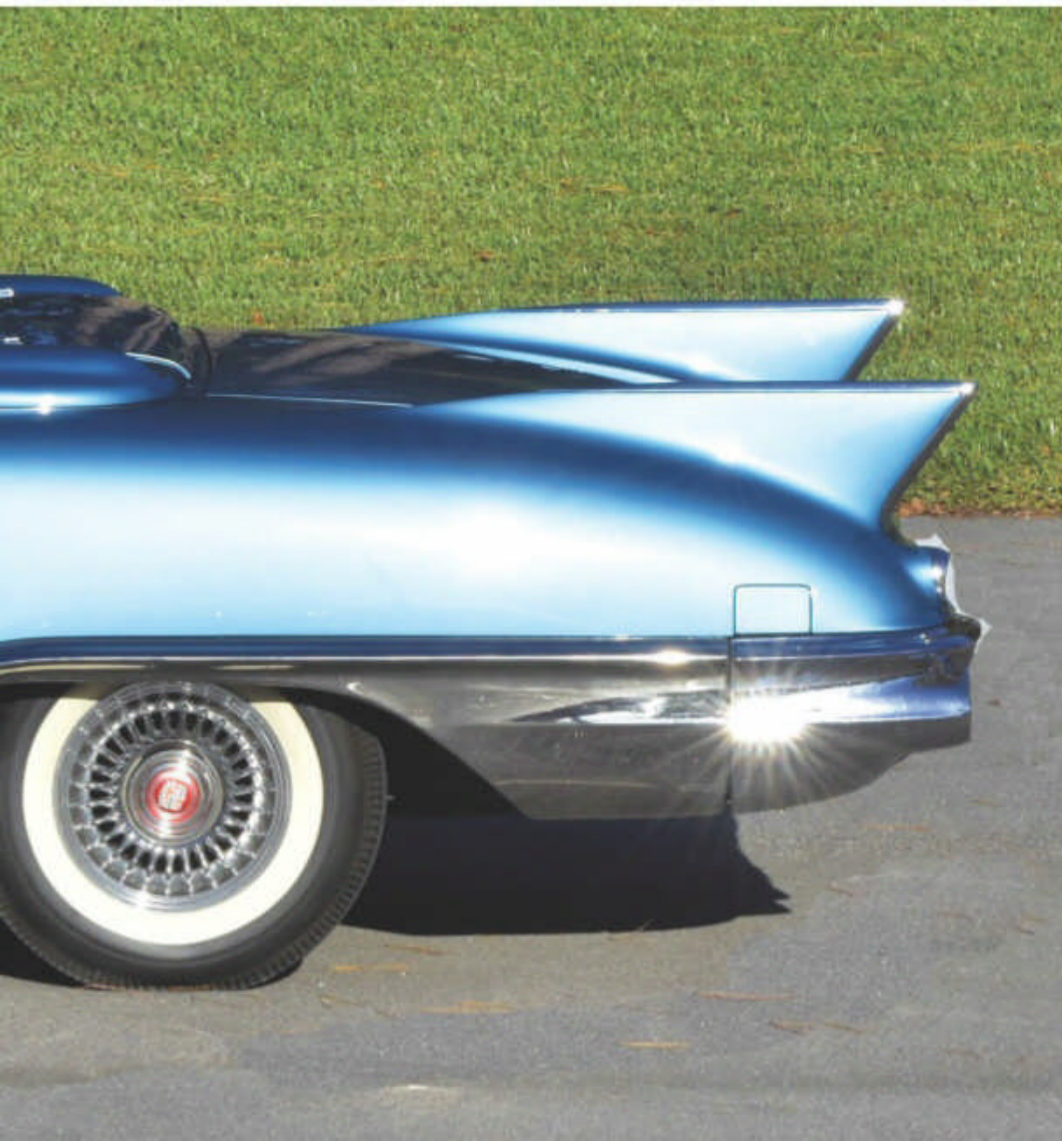




Detail abounds inside the Eldorado's cockpit and the theme is high-end Jet Age throughout. All materials are top quality. In sunlight, the blue leather and bright metal shimmer like a swimming pool. Power brakes and power steering make driving utterly effortless, in keeping with the luxury aspirations of 1957.

The Eldorado first debuted for 1953, and it wasn't just fancy trim on the standard Cadillac Series 62. It was one of a trio of sporty models created by General Motors to crown its top divisions. Buick got the Skylark and Oldsmobile got the Fiesta. All were largely hand-built with accordingly limited production runs.

Sure, Chrysler's Imperial had the technically impressive Hemi V-8 and Lincoln could boast of the prowess of its "road-race"



suspension having conquered La Carrera Panamericana, but that did not bring aspiring owners to showrooms in the same manner as Harley Earl's sumptuous styling. It was GM's dream cars for the road that led the way.

By the 1957 model year, the Eldorado stood alone, though it was now available in both hardtop "Seville" guise and as the "Biarritz" convertible. The exotic names debuted along with the hardtop body for 1956. They evoked European vacations, which were once again in vogue now that the Continent had spent more than a decade rebuilding from World War II.

Significantly, it was also for 1956 that the Eldorado had its first real challenger—in the form of the Continental Mark II, Ford's don't-call-it-a-Lincoln premium luxury model. That, too, was hand-built, and its \$9,966 price eclipsed even the costliest Cadillac—the \$6,773 Series 75 Fleetwood four-door Imperial Sedan.

Still, the reserved styling of the Continental was not really in keeping with the exuberance of mid-'50s America. The Forward Look design of the 1957 Imperial Crown convertible was more in tune with the times. Imperial, too, had become its own marque, in 1954. The 392-cu.in. Hemi V-8 was nothing to scoff at, but priced at \$5,598, even an Imperial Crown was not really in the same class as the Eldorado.

Cadillac's ultimate response to the Continental Mark II would be the Series 70 Eldorado Brougham, a space-age baroque fantasy with a brushed-stainless-steel roof. At \$13,074, it was nearly double the price of the Series 62 Eldorado shown here, and the division moved only 400 of them for 1957 and another 304 the next year. The point was made, however—Continental was quietly retired as a marque and Cadillac's position atop the heap of American luxury car brands would remain undisputed.

Ultimately, that may have been the undoing of cars like the

Series 62 Eldorado. For 1959, without the same competitive pressures, Cadillac turned the regular Eldorado nameplate into just another trim variation on the same basic body (the Brougham was still hand-built through 1960). That makes the 1957 on these pages the penultimate expression of Cadillac as a world-class constructor of luxury cars, and what an expression it is.

The chassis underneath—a tubular X-frame unit that foreshadowed the design used by Chevrolet from 1958 to '64—is the same as the standard Series 62 line. The wheelbase was likewise an identical 129.5 inches, but the overall length was 222.1 inches, slightly longer than a Series 62. All 1957 Cadillacs used a 365-cu.in. V-8 with dual exhausts, coupled to a four-speed Hydra-Matic automatic transmission. The standard engine used a single four-barrel carburetor and churned out 300 hp, but Eldorados could come with dual quads, good for a 325-hp rating.

That 325 horsepower was put to use hauling around 4,930 pounds of convertible body—all unique from the doors back. The 1957 Eldorados are physically imposing cars, comparable in length to a 2021 Cadillac Escalade (though lighter!) but with far more presence than any SUV. The "Dagmars" in the front bumper are tipped with rubber ostensibly as a defensive measure, but they look suited to work as battering rams.

Not that you'd want to go attacking other vehicles with this car. Only 1,800 convertibles were produced for 1957, and spares have gotten to be somewhat precious.

"You get worried about taking it in traffic," muses owner Bill Warner, founder of the Amelia Island Concours d'Elegance, "because if someone hit it, you'd never find parts."

He's owned this Bahama Blue car since 1989, when he acquired it locally. The previous owner had bought it from Oregon, but it was sold new in the resort area of Hempstead, Long Island,



New York. The original purchaser specified every option save for air conditioning and the Autronic Eye automatic headlamp dimmer. Despite its East Coast origins, it seems to have been a second car that was never exposed to the harsh environment of winter roads, but we can imagine it having given many summers of pleasure to its first owners. As of this writing, it has only racked up 65,100 miles in total.

Bill treated the car to a comprehensive restoration about six years ago, though it did not need an exhaustive amount of work.

"Essentially it was a good, straight car," Bill says. "It didn't need anything too extensive." The Cadillac had some floor rust patched in the process and was treated to fresh paint. "We took the heads off and increased the valve clearance a little bit to put up with modern-day fuel: It doesn't have much lubricant in it. We use Marvel Mystery Oil.

"We haven't done anything to the interior. We rechromed the rear bumpers. Shops don't like to plate aluminum. Graves Plating, up in Florence, Alabama, did it."

Despite the Eldorado's rarity, Bill still settles into the blue leather interior for afternoon drives on nice Sundays. That experience is perhaps best described as "comfortable," as this is not a sporty car—in midcentury America, sports cars and luxury cars



“It’s the kind of car that will get you front-row parking at Joe’s Stone Crab or the Beverly Hills Hotel.”

were still very separate creatures.

"You sit high and have a great view," Bill says, but "It drives like a 63-year-old car. Don't expect it to stop well or turn corners. I've got a 1958 Eldorado Brougham. It's a little more manageable than the full-size '57s. By today's standards, when you see one on the street, you cannot believe how big it is. You more or less moor it rather than park it."


The key here may be that "seeing one on the street" part. Even six decades on, this is a very stylish car. If you drive one, you *will* be noticed—even by folks who aren't "car people." The Cadillac is just a distinctive car.

"It was kind of a bizarre looking car with the big Dagmars in the front and the sheer physical size of it. Long term, I thought it would always command attention. Very few people would mistake it for anything other than a Cadillac."




That's part of the point, right? If you own one, you've arrived. Bill agrees:

"It's the kind of car that will get you front-row parking at Joe's Stone Crab or the Beverly Hills Hotel."

A 1957 Cadillac Eldorado is unapologetically a luxury car. It's big, cushy, and opulent, with styling to match. You simply cannot buy anything with the same quality and style today and even in the long history of marque, there are few cars that are more unmistakably Cadillac. 🐾



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I JUST FINISHED READING JIM

Richardson's column, "What's Your Pleasure?" in the December 2020 issue of *HCC* #195 and wanted to add my input to your study. Great story by the way. I'm 55 years old and own a 1954 Packard Pacific with a 359-cu.in. aluminum-head, Carter WCBF four-barrel, L-8 engine — a fairly unique car in my eyes and maybe the last great straight-eight.

A 55-year-old with a '54 Packard seems kind of an oddity where I live. Packard owners of this era seem to be in their 80s. I'm curious what will happen to the value when aged owners pass away and there is no interest. Anyhoo, peeps my age seem more interested in classic muscle cars and Corvettes. I never win a trophy on the Shore where the shows have lines and lines of Corvettes, Camaros, Tri-Five Chevys, Mustangs, and so on. No one ever seems to care or have knowledge or know the significance of my Packard. High-end concours shows I am sure are much different. My car is a driver, nowhere near perfect, and stuck between a vintage car and a hot rod.

Where it starts and why I like what I like began when I was as a kid. My uncle, Tony Massari, raced a '56 Chevy sedan delivery called the *Yoo-Hoo-Too* with Wayne Jesel. My grandfather was on the board of directors at Yoo Hoo and sponsored it. In the '60s, my father did accounting on the side for Bob Duffy's Performance Specialties in Red Bank, New Jersey, where the car was based. Jesel is, of course, a famous racing name now. Between the speed shop and my grandfather's driveway I saw the car a lot. Jesel recreated the *Yoo Hoo Too* in 2016, I believe.

Tri-Five interest began there, and I asked for a '57 Chevy Revell model for Christmas. What Santa sent, though, was a metal model kit of a Duesenberg Model J. Wow, what a difference. Turns out my great grandfather, Walter Shawvan, worked for Marmon and Duesenberg. In addition, he patented the first water injection system for automobiles called the "Waterator" and was best friends with Ralph DePalma, the 1915 Indy 500 winner. My grandmother also claimed her father created an automatic transmission in a Duesenberg so she could drive it when she was 14. Interesting car history family.

As I got older, I was always fascinated with defunct automobile companies and their history in addition to various car designers and stylists. Old *National*

Geographic magazines used to have great vintage car ads. My favorite era appears to be mid to late 1930s. I'm a fan of Art Deco Streamline Moderne and fascinated with the history of Auburn-Cord-Duesenberg, Packard, Marmon, Minerva, Pierce-Arrow, Hudson, Nash, Studebaker, and the like. There was a stage when I was hip with Auburn speedsters, as well as Willys coupes and gassers. Then I gravitated to Buick Gran Sport muscle cars. But by the time I had my license I went from a pickup truck to a 1963 Ford Galaxie 500XL convertible with a 406.

I drove the Galaxie through college and ownership of my first home, then let it go for pennies to a carnie. One summer while driving the Galaxie down by the beach, I passed a gas station that had a unique-looking car for sale out front. It was a convertible and looked like maybe a mid-'50s GM model. As I got closer, I noticed it was three different colors and something I had never seen before. It was a 1956 Packard Caribbean! It was a little rough and an unrestored original. I took it for a ride and it even had ice cold air conditioning. So cool.

I was 19 and had no loot, so I thought maybe I could just make a trade. No go. Once I got a hold of the real scary person who claimed he owned it he told me to get lost. The car was in the paper for 10 months with an asking price of \$10,000 (this was 1984). I read all the information I could get on Packard after that and all the information on Packard Caribbean's. I pestered the owner for months and he finally cracked for \$5,000. I went and asked my father to borrow the money and strangely, no questions asked, he cut me a check. Very dubious.

My friend's father collected Morgans and he had a truck and a trailer I bor-

rowed. I zipped down the shore in the rain to the place I had last seen the car to make the sale and the car wasn't there. The owner's family owned a group of no-tell motels and I was told to pay at one place and the pick the car up elsewhere. The family also owned a demolition company. The Packard came from a collection of cars stored in an old factory that was being demolished. None of the cars had titles. It was a very dubious situation, so I let it go.

I "Jonesed" for 30 years, wanting to get a hold of a 1956 Packard Caribbean. Caribbeans always being unattainable, I settled for 1955 and '56 Packard 400s. But never being able to procure one outside of Barrett-Jackson or Mecum, I went the 1955/1956 Packard Patrician route. Again unattainable, I dabbled in Kaiser Dragons and then I focused on 1951-'54 Packards. I read a great Hemmings' article on a 1954 Packard Pacific once and wouldn't you know, now I own one.

So much for being brief.

T. Carey

Via email

THE DRIVEABLE DREAM IN *HCC* #196

[1962 Rambler Cross Country] is a blast from the past. My dad and mom bought one, theirs was white, new from Tom's Motors in Emporia, Kansas. My brother, John, had just been born (he is about 12 years younger than me) and a larger car for travel was needed. Dad built a carpeted shelf that could fit over half the back seat so John could sleep and play, and try to get out and over to my half of the back.

We drove all the way to Butler, Ohio, in 1963, when John was about six months old, to pick up a brand-new Hi-Lo trailer, the kind you could crank up and down to open and close. It was hard-sided, so it



was a step above a pop-up trailer and tent. We made lots of trips all over the country in this car. We even had suitcases like the ones on top of this example.

The one in the magazine is very close to ours in powerplant. Dad would have had the overdrive manual transmission (three-on-the-tree). They added aftermarket A/C in 1964 or so, which made vacations nicer, and Mom no longer got sick on the first day out on our trips.

It is also the vehicle I totaled early one morning, 1968, in the State Street underpass in Emporia. Our cross-country coach was late to practice at the track complex west of Peter Pan Park, so we headed back home. We saw him coming through the underpass and the kid driving in a Plymouth in front of me stopped. I did too, but Mike Flood in a big Olds did not, and the Rambler became the meat (squashed) in the sandwich. The Olds kept pushing for a while as I was shoved into the Plymouth in front, since the Olds' accelerator was stuck.

I was able to drive home, but the Rambler's Unibody frame was bent—sort of like an upside-down saucer if I recall correctly. So, the car was totaled and that is when Dad bought their first truck, an F-100, from Tall Paul's Ford in Kansas City. Shortly, they traded the blue 1952 Nash Rambler Custom Convertible in for a 1969 AMC Rebel, which became the first car for my wife Phyllis and I in 1972.

Ted Ericson
Lincoln, Nebraska

READING JIM RICHARDSON'S

column about classic automobile accessories ("Accessories After the Fact," HCC #196) brought a flood of memories. Like Jim, I, too, poured over the J.C. Whitney catalogs during my youth, spending imaginary money on a car I did not have.

The car eventually arrived: A Chevy 210 four-door with the 265 V-8 engine and three-speed transmission. As it turned out, there was, at the time, an auto parts emporium that, for all intents, could have been a brick-and-mortar version of the Whitney catalog. If you imagined it, the doo-dah of your desire was probably in stock. If not, no doubt, it could be ordered.

After my service days, a Camaro graced the driveway and Hawley's Auto Parts was still selling wonderful accessories. I continued ogling trinkets and buying the odd device on occasion. Over time, I became friends with some of the clerks at the store.

One of the clerks shared a story that still brings a smile to my face. It seemed

there was a woman who was shopping for something unique for her husband's boat. Apparently, the husband had "everything" he could possibly get in the accessory line for his beloved craft. After a few moments of pondering, the clerk found something he was quite certain the boat did not have and sold it to the lady with the provision that if the husband already had it on the boat, she could return it for the full purchased price. The accessory? An altimeter.

Since neither the woman nor the altimeter returned to the store, the clerk was left to imagine just how the gift was received.

Thanks for the trip down memory lane, Jim.

Ken Lingbloom
Bellingham, Washington

REGARDING YOUR LEAD STORY

about the classic Mustang, there's something a friend of mine and I noticed many times while watching our Saturday night rented movies in the '90s and early 2000s. It seems a lot of movies—we only watched suspense and drama, no comedy—would use a classic-era

Continued on page 27



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Warts and All

When did you last mistake a 1959 Chevrolet for a 1959 Ford? Or a laser-emblazoned 1971 Ranchero GT for a competition-striped 1971 El Camino SS? Doesn't the absurdity of those questions validate a primary reason we like old cars and trucks; their distinctive style? Too often today, we must examine the "H" on the front of a car to see if the letter denotes a Honda or a Hyundai... more than likely in one of 50 shades of gray... metallic, of course.

Because style is at the top of most lists of why we like old cars and trucks, isn't there a tendency to want "modern" features and dispense with too many of the happy quirks that define any older vehicle? We must admit that newer vehicles run longer with less maintenance than older ones due to many design, material, engineering, and manufacturing improvements, but doesn't neutering an old car of its character, other than its style, rob the automobile of much of its personality?

Who could argue that a 1965 Ford Fairlane 289 V-8 engine is not better than a 1955 Ford Fairlane 272 Y-block V-8 of only 10 years earlier? The 289 is lighter and quieter, it probably uses less gas and oil, is certainly less prone to oil leaks, and is easier and cheaper to work on than the 272.

So why not replace every 272 with a 289? It's still a Ford, right? Because a 272 V-8 is part of the 1955 Ford experience. If you enjoy 1955 Fords, shouldn't their 272 V-8s be preserved? Sure, add dual exhausts with "Smittys" mufflers if you like... and then enjoy cruise-ins with the unique sound they produce.

Another feature worth retaining in that 272-equipped 1955 Ford Fairlane would be its 6-volt electrical system.

It is said that World War II was essentially won with war materiel manufactured by the arsenal of democracy that was the United States of America. And how did all those workers get to the factories to manufacture that materiel? True, many of them rode buses and streetcars, or even walked to work before postwar suburbs bloomed, but how

many drove or carpoled in 1930s and 1940s cars with 6-volt electrical systems? To hear some people talk today, it's a wonder they got to work at all with 6-volt electrics, much less manufactured the armaments to win a world war.

Today, slow cranking in 6-volt cars may usually be traced to someone having installed lighter-gauge, 12-volt battery cables that will not handle the current draw of a 6-volt starter. Simply rebuilding the starter and installing heavier, correct-gauge 6-volt battery cables usually solves the problem without going to all the trouble of converting the car to 12-volt electrics.

I'll also confess to not understanding 18-inch and larger wheels with rubber-band tires on cars

manufactured with 14- and 15-inch wheels, or light-duty trucks manufactured with 16-inch wheels. Larger tires and wheels can upset a vehicle's geometry to the point where it will not handle as well as it did when new, not to mention

compromising the overall aura of the vehicle's style with contemporary cues.

The photograph on this page, taken on the infield of the Indianapolis Motor Speedway, is 45 years old. In 1975, I bought this all-original 1958 Chevrolet Bel Air from Grandma's heirs in Dallas, Texas, for the princely sum of \$650. I repacked the front wheel bearings and checked it over in a motel parking lot before driving it back to Indianapolis, alone, with only a few tools. Somehow, its ancient stovebolt six and Powerglide managed to arrive in Indianapolis on its bias-ply tires, drum brakes, and distributor-point ignition with no trouble at all, save using too much oil until it got "rebroken in" from having been driven barely 40,000 "city" miles during Grandma's 18-year ownership.

I would hope to encourage enjoying collector vehicles beyond their style. I offer a tip of the old Stetson to hobbyists who restore and maintain their vehicles as they were designed and built, warts and all. Incorporating later features in a car or truck manufactured 50-plus years ago may produce questionable results and reduce the fun factor of driving any old car. 🎩



I offer a tip

of the old

Stetson to

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warts and all.



Mustang as the everyday car for one of the principal characters. It was always no later than a 1967 or '68 and many times 1965 and '66, both coupes and convertibles. Of course, I can't reference one right now, but it happened too often not to be deliberate. We wondered if it was some kind of inside joke among directors. The story line was never anything about the car itself, any more than just transportation. The genius of the Mustang was that it seemed to blend right in with the other cars 30-35 years newer when the use of a same year Riviera or Starfire would have seemed completely out of place. I just wonder if you or any other readers have noticed that phenomenon. Eddie Mitchell
Waco, Texas

We think we know what you're talking about, Eddie — there certainly were a lot of movie and television characters driving vintage Mustangs during the 1980s and '90s. We attribute it to the car's status in the world of automobiles by that time, and the affect that had on people outside

of collector-car circles. By the '80s, even to non-“car people,” the early Mustang seemed like the typical “neat old car” someone might drive if he or she were hip to what was cool and a little different from the crowd, eschewing the typical late-model choices for something that, in theory, not everyone could have anymore. A subtle symbol of individualistic good taste perhaps, strange as that might sound for a car that had been so immensely popular not so long before.

I ESPECIALLY ENJOYED TWO

articles in your February issue. First, the De Soto Adventurer. I came of age in the '50s, and I long for the days when cars could be identified without reading their name badges, when they had names like Adventurer, Roadmaster, Fleetwood, Patrician, and Coronet. Much better than today's alphanumeric jumble, which no one can remember or identify, resulting from Detroit's efforts to follow (and no longer lead) the Europeans. Of all the cars of the '50s, my favorites were the designs of Virgil Exner, when he replaced the

“box-on-box” Chrysler designs with those beautiful tailfins that began in 1957. All were magnificent, but to my eyes, the '57 De Soto Adventurer was then, and still is, the most beautiful of all. I loved that article and the photos!

Second, the 1921 Milburn Light Electric: I'm still not quite old enough to have personal memories of the old electrics, but as a preteen, in the days before TV, I was addicted to Walt Disney Comics, and Grandma Duck (Donald's grandma) drove a car just like that Milburn! I loved reading about it in your pages and seeing it outside the comic strip artist's drawings.

Now for a recommendation: I know many of your readers are of my decade where cars of the '50s are our favorites. I have always been puzzled as to why the 1957 Chevy Bel Air has become “the” classic of that decade. In my opinion, it was a real “plain-Jane” compared with the more flamboyant Ford Fairlane (which out-sold Chevy that year), and the even more beautiful Plymouth Belvedere and Fury.

Continued on page 29



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A Lifetime of Cars

I've owned 43 cars in my life... well, so far anyway. That number probably doesn't impress you as much as it does my family, friends, and neighbors, because we people in the old-car hobby tend to own a large number of cars over our lifetimes. But what may impress you is this. Those 43 cars are comprised of 21 different makes!

When I say 43 cars, I'm not counting parts cars or cars that I bought thinking I'd fix them up, but never did. No, these are 43 cars I bought, registered, and drove, sometimes for less than a year and sometimes, as in the case of my 1967 Rambler Rogue convertible, for more than 20 years.

It all started with my first car, a rusty 1961 Rambler American that I purchased with every dime I had: \$25. It was stark and uncomfortable, and it burned oil like a freighter, but it was my first car and I loved it. I kept it a year, sold it for \$90, and felt like the star salesman at a Cadillac dealership. Taking its place was a 1962 Mercury Comet with a blown engine, which I replaced with a 200-cu.in. six out of a wrecked Mustang. Compared to the Rambler it was a luxury car, but when I got a chance to buy a 1965 Pontiac Le Mans hardtop with a factory four-speed and a 350 V-8 replacement engine in it, I went for it. Alas, that Le Mans had more power than my teenage maturity could handle and within six months I had wrecked the car... and lost my license.

Sensing it was time for something with less power, I bought a 1966 Corvair convertible with the four-carb engine and a four-speed transmission. What a joy that was to drive in the summer. But when winter arrived, I learned about rusty heater boxes and sold the car as soon as warm weather returned.

Feeling ambitious, I bought two wrecked one-year-old AMC Gremlins, one hit in the front and one in the rear, and was able to assemble a nearly brand-new car out of them at a total cost of \$1,000. Alas, my fast driving got the better of me once again, and I wrecked it a year later.

There was a gas crisis around that time, so

I went back to the junkyard and bought a really nice 1969 Austin America. All it needed was some suspension work, a new battery, and a tune-up. The barn red paint had faded to white, so I hired a neighborhood kid to spend an entire day compounding and waxing it. When he got done, the car looked like new. Boy did I love driving that little Austin!

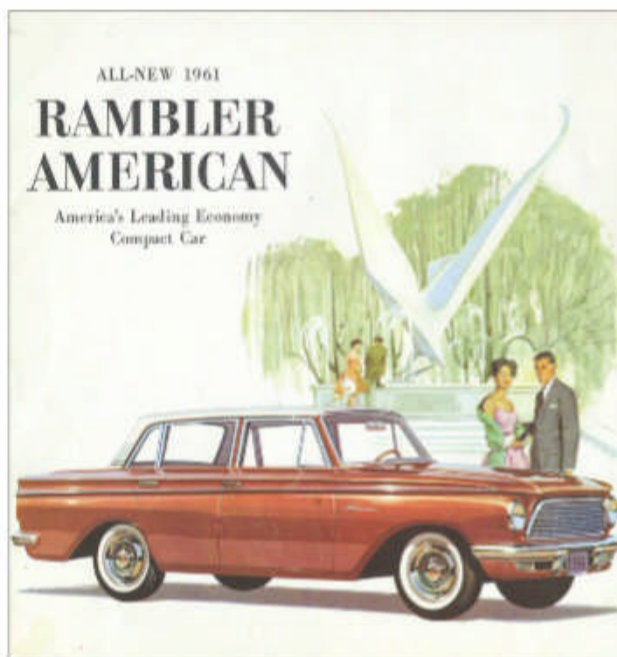
As luck would have it, my next-door neighbor had a really nice 1963 Impala Super Sport hardtop he needed to sell and, believe it or not, I bought it for just \$300. It was dark green with a white interior and needed nothing, just someone to drive it. Lucky for me it only had a 283 V-8 in it, so I didn't have any problems with losing my license or smashing the car.

My next "purchase" was a rusty 1966 Karmann Ghia someone abandoned on I-95 when it blew the engine. I towed it off the highway, put a used engine in, and fixed the rust. My brother was training to be an auto painter and his boss let him paint my car as a training exercise – all I had to do was pay for the paint. When I told them I couldn't afford paint, the shop owner let us have all the leftover paint he had sitting on the shelves. By the time we had mixed up a gallon's worth, we had created a medium gray/silver metallic that was quite attractive. A week after putting in the new engine, I drove my Ghia across the country to California, where I sold it at a profit to a used car lot in Los Angeles.

A string of three two-stroke Saab 96s followed, because I was working for the importer, Saab-Scania of America, and had caught the Saab bug. But then one day, I spotted a clean 1965 Rambler Classic on a used car lot. Despite its age – nearly 10 years old – it was in perfect shape, had a V-8 and automatic, and was in the high-level 770 trim. Well, I've always had a soft spot for Ramblers, so I bought it. It ended up being one of the best cars I've ever owned.

But a year later, a black 1970 Audi 100 coupe caught my eye and I bought it. Everyone thought I'd hit the lottery when they saw its red leather interior and real walnut dashboard. I never should have sold that car.

So, in my first 13 cars I owned eight different makes. That's been the story of my life. Someday I'll tell you about the other brands I've owned. 🚗



...cars

I bought,

registered,

and drove,

sometimes

for less than

a year and

sometimes...

for more than

20 years.



Even compared with its 1958 successor, the 1957 Chevy looks, to me, then and now, very ordinary.

I would love to see an article in which your group of expert “car men” discuss the reasons why they think the 1957 Chevy emerged over time as the top classic of the '50s.

Jerry Ramsdale
Dallas, Texas

THANKS FOR THE NICE ARTICLE

about the Fiat Jolly in your January issue (“Beach Body,” HCC #196). I know of one owner of a Jolly that you would never suspect: Lyndon B. Johnson. This President is remembered among other things as a fuddy-duddy. However, if you have a chance to go to the LBJ Ranch State Park, you will see a collection of his cars that include both a Jolly and an Amphicar. That man had a side to him that most people didn't see! It is said that he would occasionally take visiting dignitaries for a ride in the Amphicar and drive nonchalantly into a pond, frightening his passengers who had no idea the car was

amphibious. *Classic Car* lovers are where you find them.

Tom Thornell
Lockhart, Texas

I MUCH ENJOYED THE JANUARY

feature on Mustangs (HCC #196), especially since it looked beyond the usual Mustang fanboy content (How the '65 Mustang came to be; Shelbys, etc.). The ride review of the '67 Mustang coupe was especially appreciated — these were fine cars, and too often overlooked. However, the editorial comment that the '67 track and body were widened for better roadability and to add big-blocks likely misses the real point. I own a '65 convertible and can attest that the first Mustangs urgently needed more elbow room. I suspect this was the real driver for widening the original pony car.

Ralph Ward
Riverdale, Michigan

MY WIFE BOUGHT ONE OF THE VERY

first Mustangs when they came out in late 1964. It's hard to believe that in just


four years that car developed into the GT Mustang Steve McQueen drove in *Bullitt* in 1968. I know you're aware that the movie car sold in Kissimmee, Florida, at a Mecum auction for \$3.4 million.

Today, my wife drives a 1990 Camaro IROC-Z that she bought new in 1992. It was a dealer-registered car that the dealer's wife had only put 200 miles on.

Henry Link
Via email

CORRECTION: IN THE FEBRUARY

issue, we incorrectly stated that AACA membership includes membership in your local chapter. Per AACA President Steve Moskowitz, this is not the case, and we regret any inconvenience this may have caused our readers.

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

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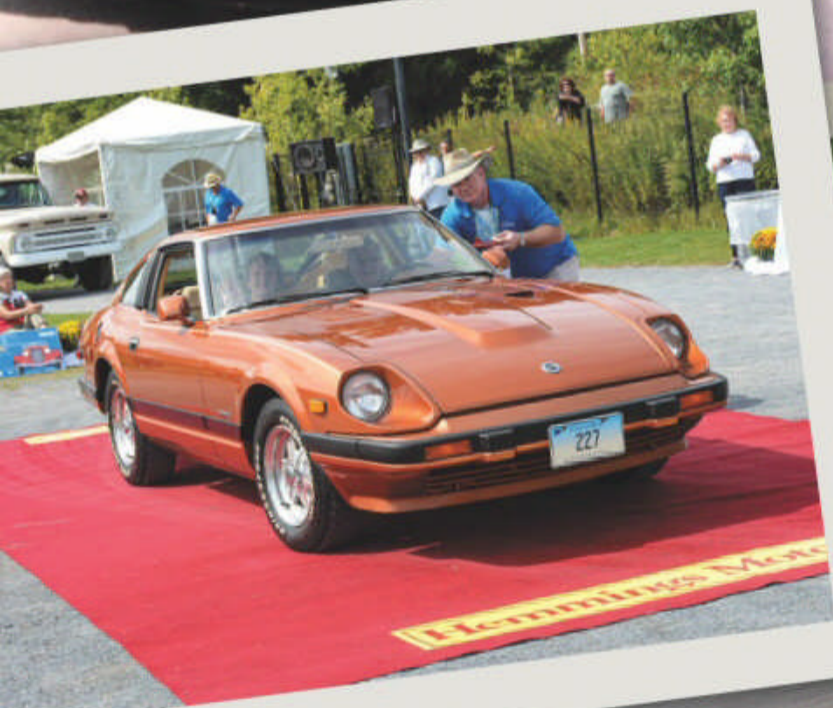
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- Seller of a 1980 Triumph TR8



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Analog and Awesome

Datsun gave its 1982 280-ZX appeal that has endured for decades

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY MARK J. McCOURT • ADDITIONAL IMAGES COURTESY OF JOYCE AND COLLEEN FITZGERALD



The special Datsun Z/ZX gathering at the 2019 Hemmings Motor News Concours d'Elegance was the most populous and popular of that year's invitation-only event, with no fewer than 16 240, 260, and 280 Zs and ZXs carefully arranged on the lawn. That strongly contested class would include



The cockpit presents like new, which is no surprise considering the car had just 17,850 miles on it when these photos were taken. Fewer than 450 of those miles were accumulated over the last decade. The ZX's many interior niceties all work. Triple gauges are a Z-car tradition.



examples from Nissan's own North America Heritage Collection fleet, as well as the AACA Museum. One of those 16 sports cars—incidentally the newest on display, and one of just two 280-ZXs present—really caught our eye, both for its incredibly preserved original condition, and for its touching history. We visited that car on its home turf last fall, and spent some time with its caretakers, to share it with you.

The shimmering copper-gold ZX with fewer than 18,000 miles on its odometer had drawn throngs of admirers during the Concours, and it was one of the elite three to leave Lake George, New York, with a class trophy. Accepting that was its owner, Connecticut resident Joyce Fitzgerald, and it was driven onto the red carpet by Rick Reale. Longtime *Hemmings Classic Car* readers may remember Rick for his 1941 Packard Clipper, which starred as a Driveable Dream in the September 2009 issue; it was

he who'd proposed Joyce's Z-car for this special class, and who, aided by Joyce's daughter Colleen, arranged to bring the car up to Lake George for the show.

Rick has known our feature car since his lifelong friend, Joyce's late husband Reid, purchased it as a surprise in April 1984. At that time, the "Datsun 280-ZX by Nissan" was virtually new, a low-mileage creampuff that Reid bought off the lot at the former Ford/Lincoln/Mercury dealership, Merriam Motors, in Wallingford. He paid \$11,190.53 for it, a sum roughly equal to \$28,045 in today's dollars; this wasn't inexpensive, but represented a savings from the \$14,499 the car cost brand new, two years earlier. Joyce remembers her first glimpse: "Reid always loved cars. He thought I was special, and I deserved something special. When I saw it in the driveway, the color was just gorgeous. I said, 'Let's go for a ride!'"

Their two-seater, resplendent in Orange Mist Metallic, represents the penultimate year of 280-ZX production, and displays the myriad small tweaks that the then-confusingly named automaker—in the awkward process of consolidating global marketing under the parent company’s brand—gave its flagship model. One of an impressive 57,260 sold here for 1982, this car features the functional NACA-ducted hood that was introduced on the new-for-’81 280-ZX Turbo, and subsequently shared with naturally aspirated models. It wears newly color-coded front and rear urethane bumpers, black B-pillar trim, refined taillamps, fresh alloy wheels, and upgraded velour interior upholstery. Also recently introduced was the “Vocalized Warning System,” which informs (chides?) occupants and bystanders in a polite, if strident, female voice when the driver’s door is open or the car is in motion, with continually repeated phrases like, “Lights are on!” “Parking brake is on!” “Fuel level is low!” This intriguing bit of Eighties technology is surprisingly analog, betrayed by the resetting click each time the trunk-mounted little vinyl phonograph reboots.

Ensuring the additional comfort this second-generation Z car promised was a long list of standard convenience features. Powered are the windows, external mirrors, and radio antenna, while air conditioning, cruise control, multi-adjustable front seats, a central locking system, four-speaker cassette stereo system, and rear window wiper/washer are among other no-cost niceties. Gee-whiz goodies that underlined this model’s value include that warning system, a dual-range fuel gauge that includes precise readings for the final quarter-tank, and new audible wear sensors for the brake pads.

Despite its crisp long-hood, scooped-headlamp, fastback styling—obviously derived from the original 240Z—and



The 280-ZX engine bay was carefully laid out, with reasonable space for routine servicing. This example still wears a perfectly legible factory-applied mylar spark plug instruction sticker on the cam cover, seen above middle left, an item typically lost due to wear.

proper manual transmission, the base two-seat 280-ZX is more comfort-oriented grand tourer than outright sports car, a role its Turbo stablemate can better play. Power assist ensures the new rack-and-pinion steering system (replacing recirculating-ball) is light, yet accurate, and this model retains the independent rear suspension design of its predecessors, rather than adopting the relocated semi-trailing arms and stronger springs, shocks, and CV joints of the contemporary five-speed Turbo. This car's unit body is underpinned by MacPherson struts, coil springs, an anti-roll bar, and boosted, vented discs up front, along with the aforementioned semi-trailing arms, coil springs, anti-roll bar, and solid disc brakes in the rear. And while Turbos got 15 x 6.5-inch alloy wheels mounting 205/60R15 Bridgestone Pontenza radials, base 280-ZXs used 195/70R14 Bridgestone Steel Belted 70s on 14 x 6-inch alloys.

Sending its thrust to the rear wheels is the traditional Z-car SOHC straight-six. Giving the car its name is that engine's 2.8-liter (168-cu-in) displacement, devised through the 86 x 79-mm (3.39 x 3.31-inch) bore and stroke. This iron block/aluminum head unit runs up to its 6,400-rpm redline very smoothly, thanks to its inherent balance and seven main bearing crankshaft. With an 8.8:1 compression ratio and Bosch L-Jetronic fuel injection, it makes 145 hp at 5,200 rpm and 156 lb-ft of torque at 4,000 rpm, all of which goes through the desirable five-speed gearbox and allows this 2,900-pound coupe to reach 60 mph in 9.1 seconds, with up to 124 mph available given the space and fuel in its 21.1-gallon tank. The 180-hp 280-ZX Turbo would be faster, naturally, but the unboosted variant performed admirably for its day.

Not that the Fitzgeralds' car has done much high-



performance driving, a fact attested to by that ultralow odometer reading. Perhaps thanks to this and the dry, covered storage it's always enjoyed, it's also required precious little repair over the last 37 years. Colleen reports that her father logged all maintenance and, outside of fluid changes, the Datsun needed one set of rear brake pads, two clutch slave cylinders, and three batteries. "Everything else is still the way the car was bought, even the tires!" she tells us, a fact corroborated by family photos taken that long-ago Easter Sunday when Reid surprised Joyce with it. Rick expresses shock that those ancient tires still exhibit no dry rot, yet assures us the car hasn't been driven any distance or speed on them, for safety's sake. He and Colleen both comment on its ground-hugging ride, noting it feels very firm compared to the modern cars they're accustomed to piloting, but that the ZX still shifts and accelerates very nicely.

Reid was a sports car guy to the core, having purchased an Austin-Healey 3000 brand new while stationed in Germany in the Armed Forces, and a Porsche 944 daily driver that was owned concurrently with the Datsun, but this two-seater was saved for special occasions for the couple. Joyce says it spent more time sheltering in the garage than it did on the road, but their outings in the 280-ZX were always memorable: "We drove it around town, but not often. Sometimes, after Mass, we'd go for a ride through the park, or take it to visit family and friends. We were so happy; we laughed a lot in the car. It's filled with wonderful, loving memories."

The prize-winning participation in Hemmings' Concours was very unusual for this modern-classic garage queen, and unforgettable for its caretakers. "When Mom and Rick were in the winner's circle, a man was talking to me about the car," Colleen recalls; "He said, 'It looks timeless.' I love the sleek,



...we
laughed a
lot in the
car. It's
filled with
wonderful,
loving
memories.

clean lines of this car, all these years later—it's really elegant." Joyce concurs, adding, "I keep the trophy on display in the living room. I know Reid would be so proud. It's funny, because we hadn't thought about the car like that before." "I can't imagine my dad's thought process was for it to end up like this," Colleen muses; "But it was really something to go to that show with Rick. For Mom and me, to get an award after being judged against restored cars... it was amazing." 🐦

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1967 Cadillac Fleetwood Eldorado

What to consider when purchasing this icon of the upwardly mobile

BY THOMAS A. DeMAURO • PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF GENERAL MOTORS

General Motors' prestige division brazenly declared that its 1967 Fleetwood Eldorado was the "World's Finest Personal Car." It was a provocative assertion for a newcomer to an established market, where the Thunderbird, the progenitor of the species, was competing with the

Riviera, Toronado, and Grand Prix for the hearts and wallets of an upscale clientele. This new Cadillac was the highest-priced offering in the personal/luxury car fray.

The reimagined Eldorado delivered contemporary styling, elevated social status, and, like its E-body platform-mate the Toronado, a front-wheel-drive layout

that offered increased traction in poor conditions and allowed a flat floor for additional legroom.

As had been true with previous larger Eldorados, this new one also featured a high level of standard equipment. Included in the \$6,277 base price was a 429-cu.in. engine; automatic transmission; power



OPPOSITE: Sharp lines, an upscale grille design with retractable headlamp covers, and a large integrated bumper define the front end. Unfortunately, none of these parts are currently reproduced. **RIGHT:** Neither are the stylish taillight lenses. **BELOW:** This snowy mountain press photo was likely meant to emphasize the Eldorado's poor-weather traction attributes. **BOTTOM:** The target market was the moderately young and affluent, as shown.



steering, brakes, windows, and (two-way) seats; clock; additional lighting for just about any place you'd ever want to look; remote control for the driver's outside mirror; and Automatic Level Control.

A few extra-cost items you'll likely see on various prospects that you inspect are Automatic Climate Control (A/C), power seats (six-way) and door locks, cruise control, remote trunk lock release, reclining seat, headrests, seat warmer, tilt and telescoping steering wheel, AM or AM/FM radio or AM/FM stereo, and Guide-Matic (auto-dimming) and Twilight Sentinel (auto on/off) for the headlamps.

Cadillac Firemist paint cost extra, as did choosing a past model-year color or a nonstandard shade via special order.

ROAD TESTS

The Eldorado was well received by the public, and reviews varied from road testers. *Motor Trend* called it "the most luxurious personal car on the road," praised its ride, power, comfort, and ventilation system, noted its understeering tendencies when driven hard, and called out the overly firm seats and poor standard drum brake performance and rearward vision.

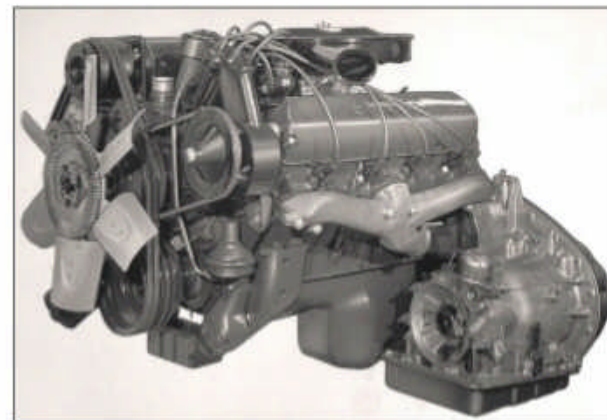
Car and Driver found the power satisfactory and offered high marks for the interior design and overall fit

and finish. Testers reported that the Eldorado exhibited predictable and controllable understeer, but the drum brakes were decidedly inferior to the optional front discs. Ultimately, they were underwhelmed with the Eldorado, stating they'd hoped it would be more unique.

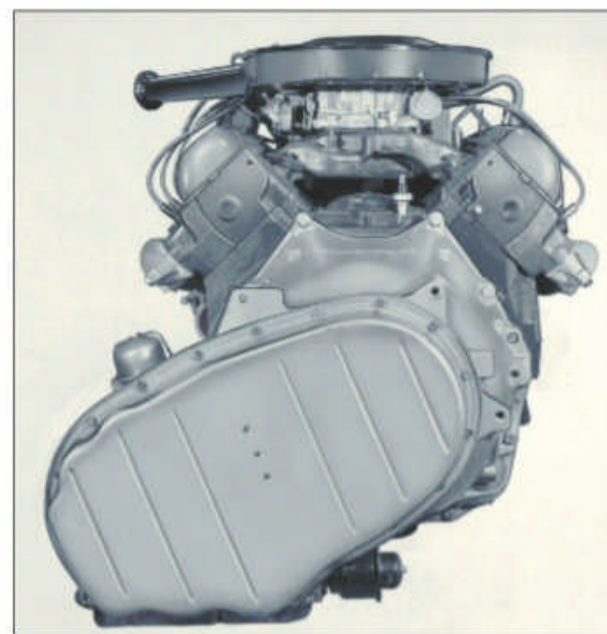
Car Life was impressed with the exterior styling, interior design, acceleration, and driveability. "Massive understeer in brisk cornering" was mentioned, but the testers raved about the handling and steering. Though disappointed with the deceleration rates during braking with the optional front discs, other positive facets of its braking were touted. Passenger comfort was highly regarded in front, but was less so in the rear.

Though blistering performance wasn't meant to be the Eldorado's forte, it's still significant to note that *Motor Trend's* highly optioned (including A/C) example posted an 8.9-second 0-60-mph sprint, *Car and Driver's* loaded cruiser did the same in a leisurely 11.7 seconds, and *Car Life's* testing netted 9.2 seconds.

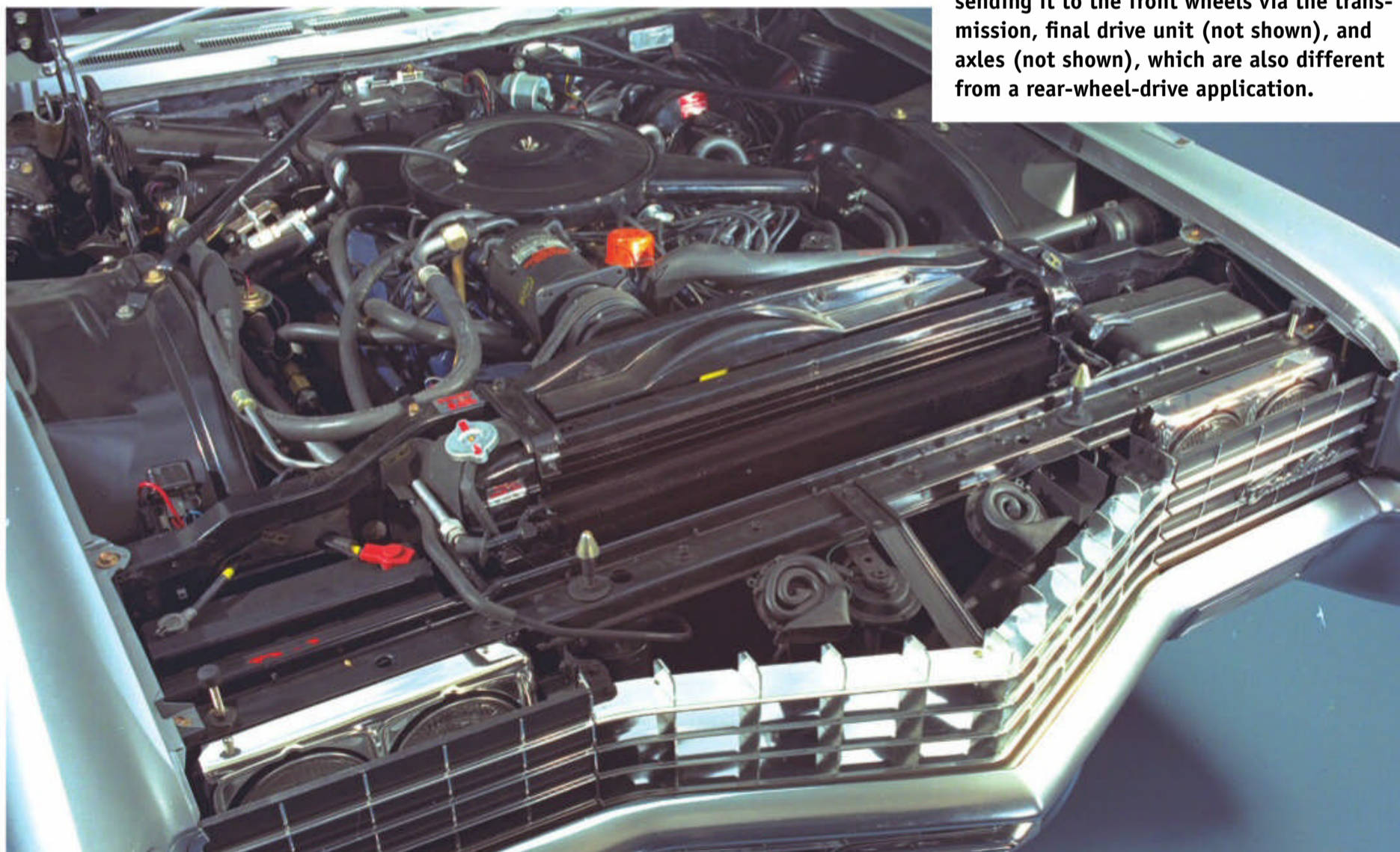
By 1967 model-year end, 17,930 Eldorados were built, outselling the larger, more traditionally styled, higher-priced, and convertible-only 1966 rear-wheel-drive version by nearly eight to one margin.



Among the engine parts revised for front-wheel-drive use were the 429's oil pan, exhaust manifolds, and engine mounts.



Behind the cover is the Hy-Vo chain that enables the power flow to turn 180 degrees, sending it to the front wheels via the transmission, final drive unit (not shown), and axles (not shown), which are also different from a rear-wheel-drive application.



The accessory-laden 429 engine and the headlamp and retractable door setup are revealed. Note the bright headlamp bezels that maintain a tailored front-end appearance when the doors are open.



The dual exhaust system with single transverse-mounted muffler and a single outlet pipe and resonator (not shown) is currently available. Replacement rear leaf springs are as well.

BODY

Knife-edged styling and a long-hood/short-deck theme characterized the new design. Retractable headlamp covers and a formal roofline with a vertically creased backlite and decklid, as well as prominent squared-off wheelwells, distinguished it further. The smallest Cadillac in the lineup, the Eldorado was 221 inches long, 80 inches wide, and 53.3 inches tall, but was still 10 inches longer and 1.5 inches wider than the Toronado.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

Though certain examples may have been coddled by their owners via light usage, indoor storage, and proper maintenance, rust is still the primary enemy, so examine the body closely in the usual areas like the fenders behind the front wheels, rocker panels, lower doors,

floors, wheelwells, rear quarter panels, trunk floor, and around the windshield and backlite. If the car is equipped with the optional padded vinyl top, check it for soft spots—especially near the edges—and visible signs of rust on the surrounding metal. Also scrutinize the body for paint and trim issues and evidence of lackluster repairs.

Tom Kelly, a car collector from Arizona, has owned five front-wheel-drive Eldorados from this era, as well as several Toronados. While he makes it clear that he's not a mechanic, the knowledge he's gained from his first-hand experience with these cars over four decades will add insight to this guide.

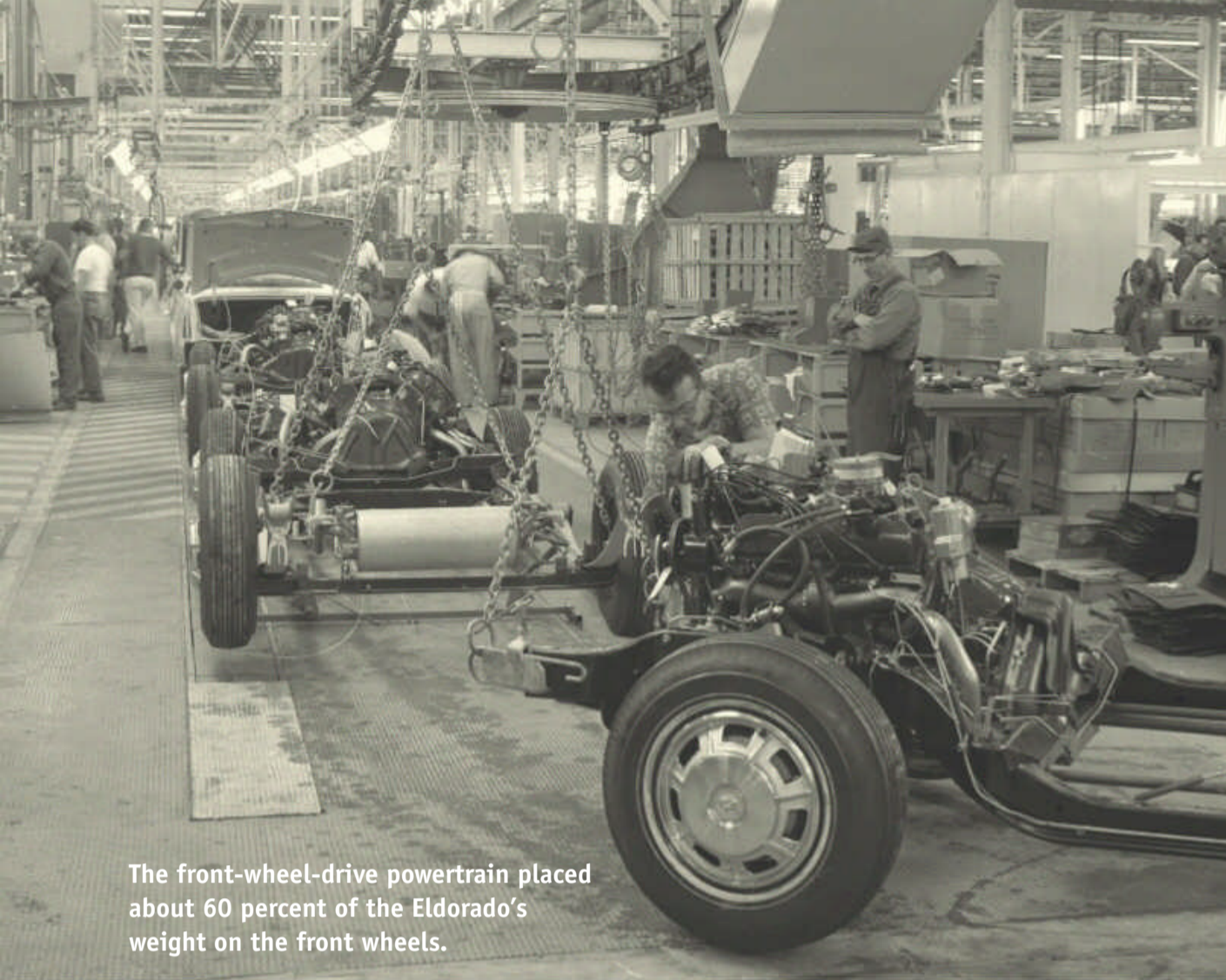
WHAT TO PAY

	Low	Average	High
1967 Eldorado	\$7,600	\$13,500	\$31,000

He warns, "Headlamp doors that don't come up on their own is a sign of leaking vacuum hoses and/or actuators that will require attention." He also advises to lift up on the car's doors when they're open to check for worn hinges, because the labor cost can be high if they need to be replaced. Removing the spare tire to check for rust in its well is also warranted according to Tom.

ENGINE

Cadillac's 429-cu.in. (4.13-inch bore x 4.00-inch stroke) V-8 was rated at 340 hp and 480 lb-ft of torque. It featured a new-to-Cadillac Quadrajets carburetor;



The front-wheel-drive powertrain placed about 60 percent of the Eldorado's weight on the front wheels.

breaker-point distributor; valvetrain and hydraulic-lifter camshaft revisions for quieter operation; cast-iron block, crankshaft, heads, and manifolds; forged-steel connecting rods; aluminum-alloy pistons; improved cylinder bore finish and piston ring design to further reduce friction; and a 10.5:1 compression ratio that required premium fuel.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

With proper maintenance, the 429 V-8 will remain smooth and dependable. Tom suggests asking for service records and an owner history when looking at a prospect, since they can provide insight as to the level of care the Cadillac received. Even if you get them, still cover the basics. Check all fluid levels and their condition and look for leaks. Inspect the A/C compressor clutch—Tom says that a missing belt usually indicates it's seized.

With the engine running, listen for exhaust leaks. Watch the tailpipe for sustained smoke beyond typical condensation burn-off. Eliminating white (coolant) or blue (oil) smoke can get expensive, depending on the diagnosis. Listen for odd sounds, such as tapping from the top end and/or knocking from the bottom end.

DRIVETRAIN

The Turbo Hydra-Matic 425 (TH425) three-speed transmission was designed to incorporate a front-wheel-drive powertrain while retaining the longitudinal mounting of a V-8. The engine sent torque through the variable-stator-equipped converter

at the back of the engine, and a 2-inch-wide "silent" Hy-Vo (high-velocity) chain and sprockets transferred it to the 2.48:1/1.48:1/1.00:1-gear TH425 transmission positioned next to the engine instead of behind it. Power was then sent forward to the 3.21:1 final drive unit and to the wheels through axle shafts with constant velocity joints.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

The Hy-Vo chain has proven itself to be extremely durable, so it shouldn't be a concern. Based on the TH400, the TH425 is also a rugged transmission, yet it can be rebuilt if needed and kits are available. Nevertheless, remember to check for leaks around the powertrain when under the car. Also look for tears in the CV joints' rubber boots, as contamination of the joint will promote rapid wear.

CHASSIS

A boxed perimeter frame extended from the front of the car rearward, to just after the passenger compartment where it then became integral with the body. The Eldorado's 120-inch wheelbase was 1 inch longer than the Toronado's. It was also 9.5 inches shorter than the full-framed Calais and De Ville, yet the Eldorado's body was just 3 inches shorter thanks to significant overhang.

Also unlike other Cadillacs, the Eldorado employed a torsion-bar system for its unequal-length control arm front suspension, to allow space for the axle shafts. An anti-roll bar was also used

up front and leaf springs located the rigid rear axle. Vertically angled shocks dampened wheel/tire movements and were augmented by two horizontally mounted shocks in the rear. Though the chassis design mirrored the Toronado's, its components were tuned for Cadillac's desired ride and handling characteristics.

Exclusive variable-ratio power steering with just 2.75 turns to lock was standard, as were 9.00 x 15 bias-ply tires on 15 x 6-inch steel wheels with cooling openings and slotted wheel covers delivering air to the power-assisted drum brakes. The Eldorado was the only 1967 Cadillac to offer a front disc brake option.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

Examine the undercarriage for heavily rusted areas, obviously worn parts, indications of prior accident damage, and potential safety issues. Tom relates, "Like most cars with a lot of weight up front, the A-arm bushings are usually worn." Also check the condition of fuel and brake lines.

Automatic Level Control compensated for passenger, cargo, and trailering loads by increasing the air pressure in the rear shocks. When the extra weight was removed, it automatically decreased the pressure to level the ride height. According to Tom, the system rarely still works and can be a challenge to repair and find parts for, so many owners simply install air shocks in the rear for an easier and less-expensive fix.

INTERIOR

Like the rest of the Fleetwood line for 1967, rectangular shapes dominated the elegant instrument panel with its

REPRODUCTION PARTS PRICES

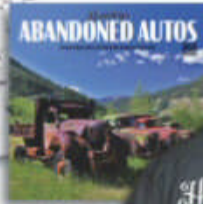
Axle shaft with CV joint	\$60
Complete exhaust system with resonator	\$500
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Front end rebuild kit	\$490
Heavy-duty four-row radiator	\$600
Horizontal rear shocks	\$130
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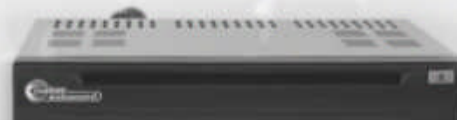
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horizontal speedometer and temp and fuel gauge layouts, square clock, and raft of warning lamps. A Darien cloth-and-vinyl upholstered Strato-bench seat with a wide fold-down center armrest was standard, and Dalmatian cloth with vinyl was optional, as was leather. Strato-bucket seats with cloth-and-vinyl or leather upholstery and a short console also cost extra.

Interior items were generally durable, but 54 years of service is a long time, so seat stitching can split, steering wheel rims and dash pads can crack, carpets can fade and wear thin, and so on.

Additionally, since these models are laden with accessories and because much of the personal luxury car driving experience hinges on having conveniences at your fingertips, it's imperative that you check all of them for proper operation. If some don't work, you'll have to weigh their relative importance to you against what may be required to fix them. For instance, according to Tom, "Many times the optional Automatic Climate Control isn't working. The excuse usually is that the system is low on or out of refrigerant, but normally it's not that, and the various possible issues can get complicated and expensive to fix." Whether or not the system was converted from R-12 refrigerant to R-134a is another question to ask, even if the A/C is working.

TEST DRIVE

A test drive can confirm the proper operation of the powertrain, suspension, brakes, and additional systems. It can also reveal upcoming driveability issues like clicking from a CV joint when cornering and/or accelerating, which indicates it's not being lubricated and is wearing quickly.

REPLACEMENT PARTS

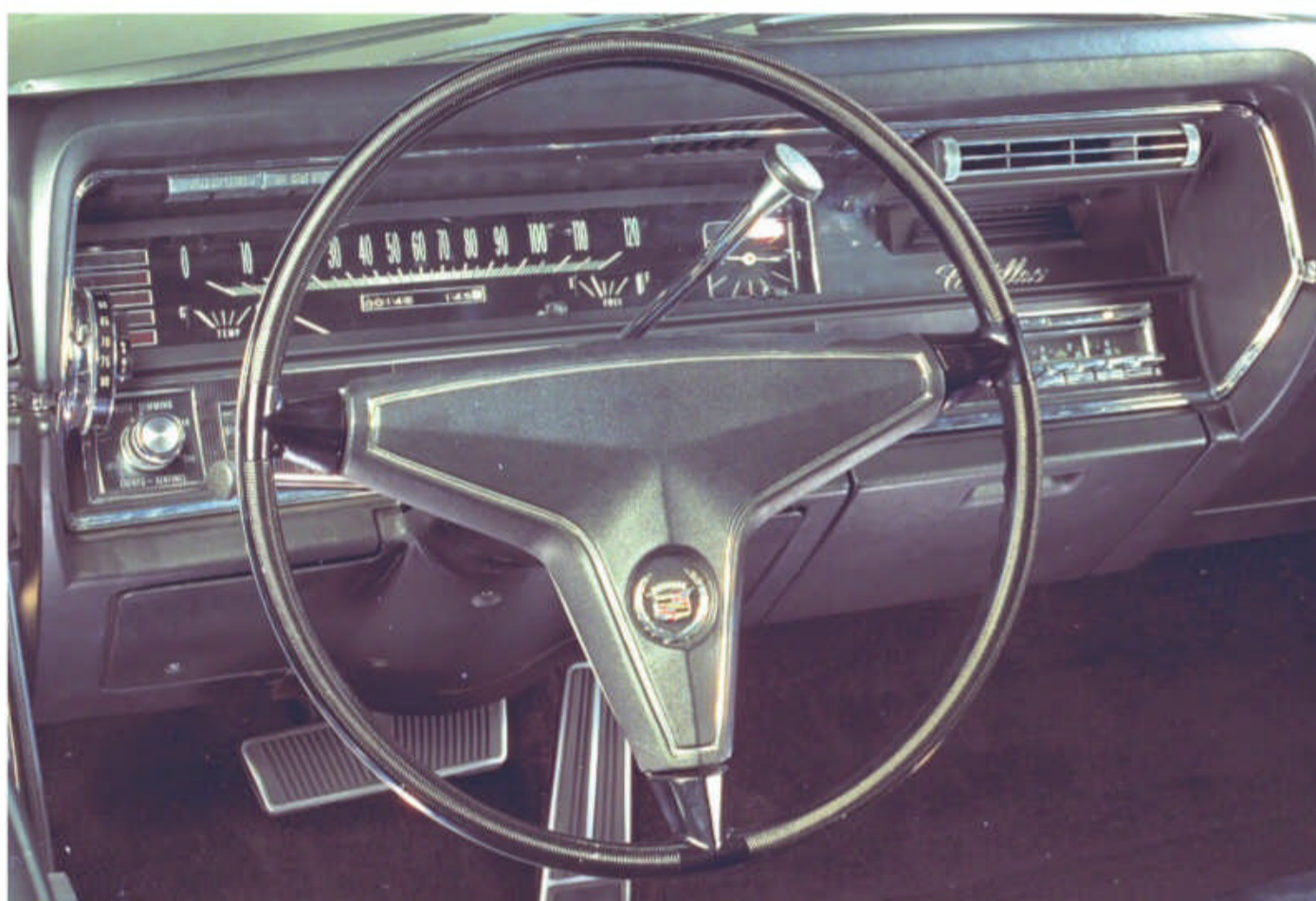
The exclusivity of Eldorado ownership can be a double-edged sword when it comes to replacement parts. While a decent selection for the powertrain, suspension, steering, cooling system, and brakes is available new or rebuilt, body panels, except for lower fender patches, are not reproduced, so they will have to be sourced from the dwindling supply of used and NOS parts.

We've seen seat covers offered on a per-order basis, but no door panels or dash pads are currently reproduced. Some new wiring harnesses can be had and others can be recreated from cores. Several A/C system parts are available, as are some items that were shared with other Cadillac models and years.



HEMMINGS ARCHIVES

ABOVE: Note the flat floor for increased legroom. The unique radio design placed both knobs on its left for easier reach by the driver. **BELOW:** This factory photo shows the numbered cruise control dial to the left of the headlamp switch, which had the Guide-Matic and Twilight Sentinel integrated into it. Rear defogger and the seat heater switches were mounted just below the dash pad, at the upper left of the speedometer.



CONCLUSION

The front-wheel-drive personal/luxury 1967 Eldorado broke new ground for Cadillac and was widely admired. Its memorable driving experience can still be yours at reasonable prices today, but

given the lack of reproduction body parts and the number and complexity of some of its systems and accessories, purchasing a solid original or competently restored example will save you time and money over resurrecting a project car. 🚗

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spotlight
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Rescued Elegance

Found in 1966, this rare 1907 Model M Straight Line Touring recalls Cadillac's early foray into the luxury car market

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY MATTHEW LITWIN

Remember rotary-dial telephones, long letters from relatives detailing the latest family happenings, and oversized print newspapers with thick classified sections? Some call the pre-digital era of news and communication a “simpler time,” and there may be a little element of truth to that. Unless, of course, you were anxious to purchase a particular vintage vehicle. That meant scouring those pages of semi-organized local newspaper classified listings. There were other options of course, such as subscribing to our parent publication, *Hemmings Motor News*, wearing a self-made cardboard sign at car shows and swap meets, or promoting your ownership desires through word of mouth.

One who remembers those days of fastidious automotive searching all too well is Old Lyme, Connecticut, resident Sam Willard. Back in 1966, after completing his military service obligations, Sam was teaching automotive classes at a school in Bristol—about an hour commute northwest of Old Lyme. One day, a conversation with his students turned to the early era of domestic automobile production.

“Part of one lesson was teaching the kids about the one-cylinder cars that were prevalent in the infancy of the industry, and I added in passing that I’d always wanted to own one someday. Several days later, a student of mine came to me and said, ‘I found you a one-cylinder Cadillac.’ He told me it was in Harwinton, about 20 minutes further north from where I lived, but I just had to go and check it out. True to my student’s word, there was this 1907 Cadillac that was mechanically complete and running, although the back half of the body was missing. I bought it nonetheless,” recalls Sam.

Although it could be said that Cadillac was still in its infancy in 1907, the company had already established a name for itself in the industry after rising from the financial ashes of its former Henry Ford Company incorporation. It had famously been saved in August 1902 by Henry Leland, who had advised the company’s principal investors to reorganize, rather than liquidating the equipment and factory. Leland also offered his revised engine, which had earlier been refused by Ransom Olds, to help expedite development of a true passenger car that could be mass produced. This was welcomed news for the principal investors, since the firm had only made a handful of cars—most of them designed for racing—before Ford exited the scene.

The collaboration between Leland and the newly renamed Cadillac Automobile Company bore fruit immediately with the production of three prototypes, the first completed in mid-October 1902. Rigorous testing followed, during which time

sales manager extraordinaire William Metzger was hired. By December, the first Cadillac Model A’s were delivered to Metzger for display at the 1903 National Automobile Show in New York City in mid-January.

The two-passenger car featured a horizontally mounted, 10-hp one-cylinder engine mounted to a 76-inch-wheelbase chassis. Measuring 111 inches in overall length, the car included a two-speed planetary transmission with a chain-drive system, and it could reach a top speed of 30 mph. Its price was a modest \$750. By comparison, Ford’s original Model A cost \$850, a Franklin runabout commanded \$1,300, and Packard’s Model F started at \$2,250.

Production began on time in March 1903, despite Metzger returning from the auto show with an astounding 2,286 orders for the new Cadillac, all of them accompanied by a \$10 deposit. The demand was so strong that he had to declare the car “sold out” mid-show. The Cadillac Model A would continue to be produced a year later, virtually unchanged, but was now accompanied by an improved Model B. Despite a factory fire during the year, Cadillac’s 1904 model year output numbered 2,418 units (though another source puts this quantity at 2,319).

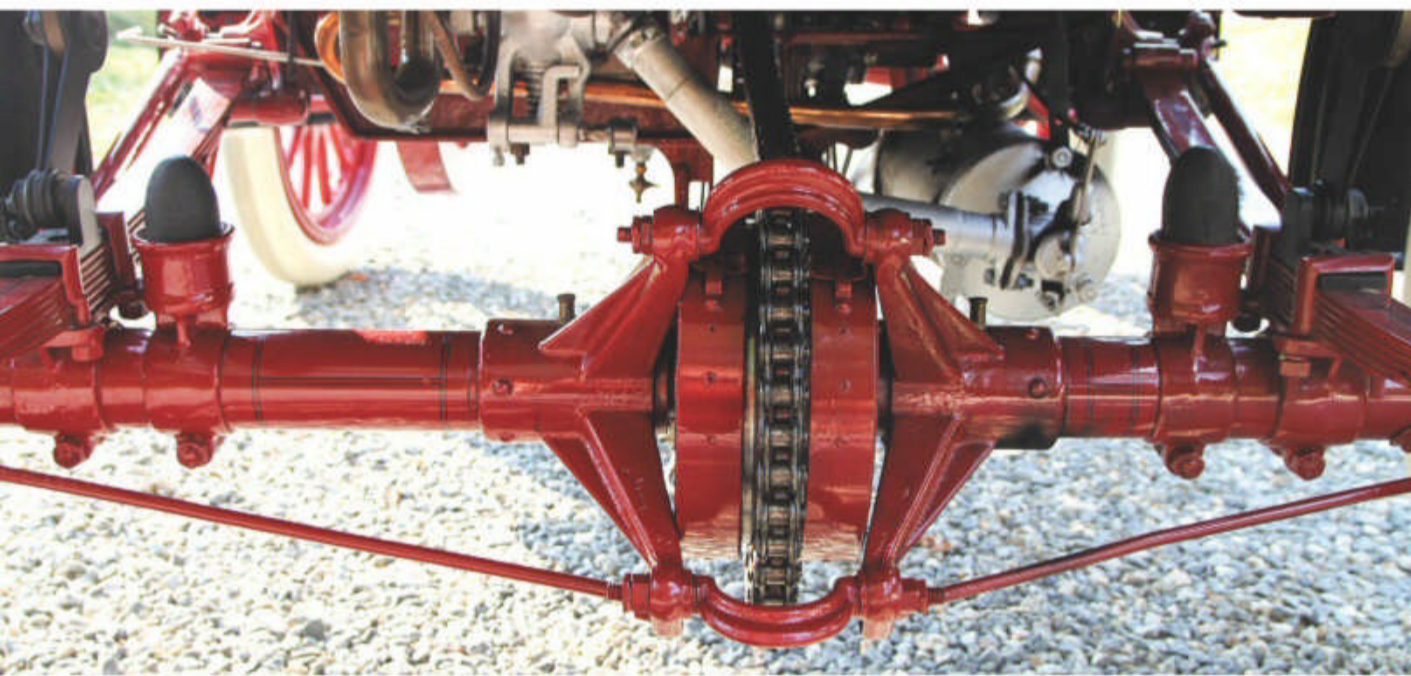
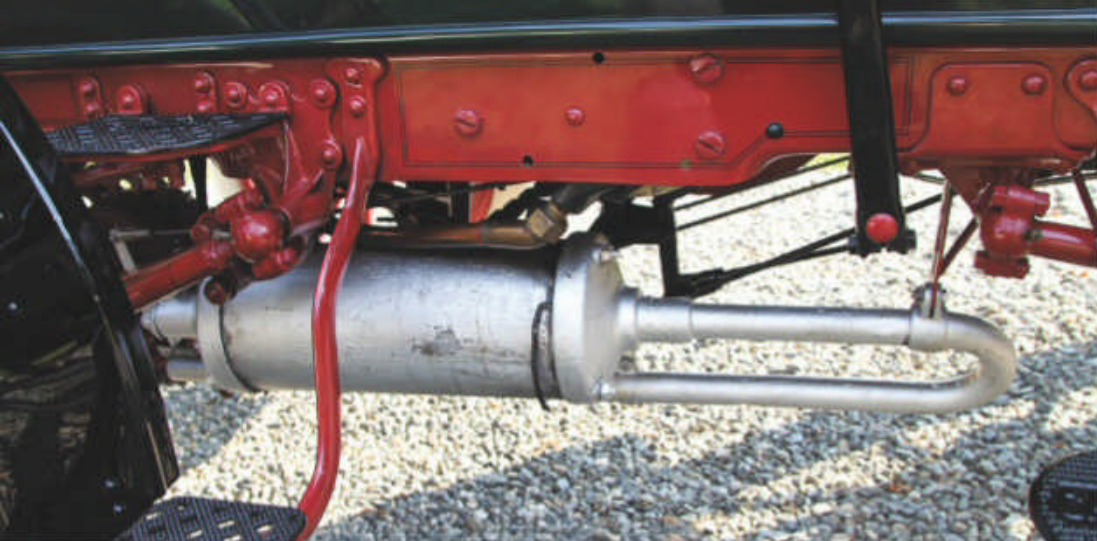
Before the calendar flipped to 1905, Henry Leland’s firm, Leland and Faulconer Manufacturing Company, was fully consolidated with The Cadillac Automobile Company, with the automotive venture renamed the Cadillac Motor Car Company. Leland was, in turn, selected as Cadillac’s general manager. It simultaneously marked Cadillac’s official entry into the luxury car market with the addition of four new models and a four-cylinder engine, along with new styling and other mechanical refinements. Cadillac’s one-cylinder, however, remained an intricate part of its 1905 sales via the Model B, E, and F, and in the Model K and M unveiled a year later.

Like most of its one-cylinder siblings, the new 1906 Model M made use of Cadillac’s basic 76-inch-wheelbase chassis architecture that had been revamped two years prior. Its engine, however, had been enlarged—the bore and stroke both measured 5 inches, though Cadillac continued to rate it for 10 hp in the Model M, which was sold as a Light Touring. Its graceful “tulip-design” bodywork was commonly called the side-entrance touring, which now cost \$950. A surrey top, headlamps, and cowl lamps were optional. The Model M Light Delivery, featuring a C-type cab, also cost \$950.

The Model M would continue into the 1907 model year, albeit with only a couple of subtle mechanical alterations.



The dash-mounted Spark Coil, also called “Buzz Box,” is the Cadillac’s magnetic circuit breaker, a key part of which is a .25-inch diameter “cut-out plug” that needs to be inserted to start the car. A knob controls the contact arm, allowing the operator to easily switch between two batteries.



Despite the technical advances made within Cadillac since 1905, the 1907 Model M series continued to employ the manufacture's tried-and-true horizontally mounted 98.2-cu.in. one-cylinder engine in conjunction with a chain-drive system. Unlike contemporary vehicles, the "one-lunger" was mounted directly under the front passenger seat and rear floorboards. Shock absorbers were a standard feature.

More notable was the expansion of body styles. While the Light Delivery was still offered, new to the series was the \$1,000 Folding Tonneau, which allowed for the nifty conversion from two- to four-passenger configuration. A two-passenger coupe was obtainable for \$1,200, while an elegant Victoria Light (still in tulip-design guise) was one of two touring cars in the series costing an attractive \$950. Rounding out the Model M lineup was the \$950 "Straight" Light touring, or "Straight Line" depending upon the reference material. Published accounts vary, but it's believed roughly 1,600 Model M cars were built for '07.

It was one of these Straight Line touring Model Ms that Sam had purchased. When new, the Cadillac had been shipped to prominent Buick, Cadillac, and Pope-Hartford dealer E.P. Chesbro, of Willimantic, Connecticut, on February 20. Who it was originally sold to remains a mystery, but local lore suggests it remained in the state during its early years before it was relegated to farm duty. Its back seat and corresponding body panels were removed, and its 98.2-cu.in. one-cylinder engine was used to power a saw that cut firewood. The Model M was then sold in January 1958 by Thomaston resident John Lyons, to Raymond Bentley and his son-in-law, Edward Thierry, both of Harwinton.

"Together, Raymond, Edward, and I tried to find the body for the Cadillac, but we never could. So, for the first five or six years, I drove the hell out of the car in the spring and fall on the private roads in the woods of Old Lyme. There was nobody around back

then. I enjoyed it so much, and there was no quit in it," said Sam.

In the years that followed, Sam founded Vintage Motorcars LLC in Westbrook and began the long search for the car's unique door hinges and rear body section. It was a quest that was still ongoing in the early Nineties, when he finally began the diligent restoration of the Model M's chassis and mechanical systems at his facility. Unfortunately, the restoration fell dormant due to the missing parts—that is until his company was commissioned to restore a weather-worn, but completely original, 1905 Cadillac.

"It had the same Straight Line body, complete with those screwy hinges that permit the doors to open up and out simultaneously. I copied the body and removed the hinges so that I could have a duplicate set cast. That's how I was able to finish my Cadillac. Because so much of mine was original, I replicated everything from the red paint on the chassis and wheels right down to the upholstery pattern on the seats and door panels. Some of the striping had survived as well, and looking at the '05, I was able to piece together how it would have looked in '07. Don't forget, back then it was done by individuals, so there were

subtle variations in how the stripes were laid down."

Due to the delay, Sam wasn't able to complete the Cadillac's restoration until the summer of 2010. Despite his affinity for the one-cylinder Model M—one of just 20 such examples known to exist globally today—it was used sparingly and stored in a safe corner within the Vintage Motorcars facility.



Sam Willard (left) purchased the Cadillac in 1966 and eventually oversaw its painstaking restoration, the result of which is being shared with others by current owner Bill Lillie (right).



“Three or four of them are nothing more than frames with a few parts, but they’re known cars,” adds Gales Ferry, Connecticut, resident Bill Lillie, who first spotted the Cadillac lurking in the shadows when he commissioned Vintage Motorcars to restore a car from his collection. “I didn’t realize how good it was, because when I first saw it, it was in a dark corner. I thought, ‘Oh, I love it!’ I’ve always liked these cars. I asked Sam about it and eventually he moved it into the light and dusted it off, which made me think, ‘Holy smoke, this is really nice,’” he adds.

Over the course of restorations on Bill’s other two cars, he and Sam would talk about the Cadillac in growing detail. Eventually, Sam concluded that if there was anyone worthy of shepherding the Model M into the next chapter of its history, it should be Bill. Negotiations were short, but the sale was conducted over the course of two years, to accommodate Bill’s finances.

“Sam wanted me to take it right away, but it was really his car until I was able to obtain it fully this summer. Truthfully, I feel like it’s still very much Sam’s car and he just lets me drive and show it, and share its history with others. I’ve been getting to learn it and have been able to dial it in; it’s been a fun process.

He put everything he knows into it, and 10 years later it’s winning class awards at concours events,” says Bill.

“These things never gave up and that’s why they were popular for a long time,” Sam said. “But they were changed a lot, too. Many of these cars are not right to begin with, because nobody is alive who really knows if they are right or if they are wrong. Only somebody like myself—there’s quite a few guys like me—who painstakingly researches and restores them, comes close or gets it right. I got right into the midst of it and I was fortunate in that this car was all-original. There may be some that are just as good, but there are none better.” 🐾



Star Power Squared

The Mercedes-Benz G-Wagen shines off road and on the boulevard

BY MIKE McNESSOR • PHOTOGRAPHY PROVIDED BY DAIMLER

It's based on a beefy, boxed-steel frame with tubular crossmembers, welded together by Austrian craftsmen. Front and rear hydraulic locking differentials? They're standard and housed in solid axles hung from long-travel, coil-spring suspension. This rig was designed to ford 2 feet of water, climb 80-percent grades, and its legendary off-roading mettle was forged in the fires of the Paris to Dakar Rally, as well as in military service the world over.

None of that probably matters much to Kim Kardashian West, whenever she drives her Mercedes-Benz G-Class to Neiman Marcus to pick up a \$2,000 handbag. But hopefully she finds it comforting to know the capability is there, if she ever needs it.

It begs the question though: How did the G-Wagen pivot from conqueror of the planet's toughest terrain to preferred luxury coach of celebrities, professional athletes, hip-hop artists, etc. The truck known as the Geländewagen, or G-Wagen, and later G-Class, wasn't conceived to attract the rich and famous, but it checks all the boxes: low production numbers, handbuilt construction, a steep asking price, and, last but certainly

not least, that outsized three-pointed star on the grille. These are qualities that have defined it from the very beginning and distinguished it from other 4x4 utilities — whether trekking through the Pyrenees or cruising Rodeo Drive.

Development of the Mercedes-Benz G-Wagen began in 1972, when Daimler-Benz forged a deal with truck and tractor maker Steyr-Daimler-Puch in Graz, Austria. Steyr was an obvious choice to build a light off-roader as it had already developed the featherweight Haflinger 4x4 and the heavier Pinzgauer 4x4/6x6 military trucks. M-B maintains today that its G-Wagen wasn't designed strictly for the armed forces — that it

was intended to be a commercial-grade 4x4 civilian utility from the start. But the Shah of Iran was influential during its development and placed an order for 20,000 G-Wagens in the mid-1970s. (He was ousted and fled the country before the G-Wagens could be delivered.) The Federal German Border Police, as well as the Argentinean and Norwegian armies, placed orders early on, too, so clearly M-B had some military-grade aspirations for the G-Wagen.

The chief designer of the G-Wagen was Erich Ledwinka, who also designed the Haflinger and Pinzgauer at Steyr. (Ledwinka was the son of the legendary Hans Lewinka — chief designer at Tatra responsible for the streamlined, rear engine T77, 87, and 97.) At the outset, the new project was named H2, for Haflinger 2. But the H was later changed to a G for Geländewagen (off-road vehicle or terrain vehicle).

The first G-Wagen mockup was hammered together out of wood and presented to management in 1973. The first prototype — made of metal and powered by a 2.3-liter M-B gasoline engine — was ready by September 1974. In 1975, two more advanced prototypes







Decades before AMG-tuned supercharged V-8s, the G-Wagen was offered with the humblest of engines from the M-B lineup, like this carbureted 2.3-liter four, putting out 90 hp.

were developed, displaying the short- and long-wheelbase versions of the truck. That same year, Mercedes-Benz and Steyr officially decided to produce the G-Wagen and sealed the deal by erecting a new plant in Graz, where the boxy truck is built today. It's still assembled by skilled craftspeople, too — with limited automation — as it has been since the beginning, to the tune of about 50 per day.

The first G-Wagen was the 460 series, which made its debut in 1979. Mercedes-Benz provided the engine, transmission, axles, and steering, along with as the larger pressed components, while stamped and smaller pressed parts, as well as the transfer case, were produced by Steyr-Daimler-Puch.

The lineup of M-B G-models (it was also sold as a Puch G-Wagen in Eastern Europe until the late 1990s) initially consisted of the 230 G with a four-cylinder gasoline engine, the 240 GD with a four-cylinder diesel engine, and the 300 GD with a five-cylinder diesel. In early 1980, the 280 GE broke cover, armed with a more powerful fuel-injected, six-cylinder gasoline engine. At that time, all of the powerplants were paired only with a four-speed manual transmission, and used very deep axle gearing — in the range of 4.88:1 to 5.33:1. The truck's VG 080 T-case permitted four-wheel-drive engagement on the fly and the axle lockers could be engaged while rolling. The heavy-duty, coil-spring suspension used trailing arms and transverse links to keep everything in line and made the G-Wagen confidence-inspiring off road without punishing the driver and passenger on the pavement.

Customers could choose the first production G-Wagens in short or long wheelbase with a closed body, or as a short-wheelbase convertible. (For the

military, there was also a long-wheelbase convertible with two or four doors.) Body color choices were limited to Cream White, Wheat Yellow, Colorado Beige, Carmine Red, and Agave Green. The G-Wagen's options list was about as minimal as you'd expect for a purpose-built off-roader: a lockable glove compartment, power steering, halogen headlamps, and a clock. The G's two-spoke steering wheel and switchgear were lifted from the Mercedes-Benz commercial vehicle parts bins, and the interior was spartan. Nevertheless, the price of a well-equipped G-Wagen ran nearly as high as a premium Mercedes sedan.

Late in 1980, a closed panel-van body was added to the lineup and a few more creature comforts became available, including a removable hardtop for the convertible, a four-speed automatic (for the 280 GE with the fuel-injected six and the 300 GD with the five-cylinder diesel), air conditioning, a Webasto heater booster, Recaro seats, and metallic paint. For serious off-roaders there were options like a cable winch, power take off, rifle racks, auxiliary fuel tanks, a tropical roof for hot climates, and protective headlamp grilles.

For 1983, there were a few more metallic paints added to the color palette and a five-speed manual was offered with the 280 GE and 300 GD, while an automatic was available with the fuel-injected four-cylinder powered 230 GE. Improvements continued to trickle in over the rest of the decade: illuminated switch gear, a tachometer, available carpets, power steering, power windows, and central-locking door locks, to name a few. The G-Wagen remained officially unavailable in the United States, but during the 1980s, grey-market importers began bringing



them Stateside where they became a cult vehicle for well-heeled buyers.

In the early 1990s, the G-Wagen line went in two directions. The 460 series was replaced with the 461, which became the dedicated workhorse for commercial or military customers. It came standard with selectable four-wheel drive, a five-speed manual, a big fuel tank, bare-bones interior, etc. Meanwhile, the 463 series was tailored toward consumers in the market for a top-of-the-line SUV wanting to make an unusual fashion statement.



The 463 G-Wagen made its world premiere at the Frankfurt Motor Show in 1989, looking more civilized than its predecessors. Inside, the dashboard design was inspired by the M-B 124 series cars, there was typical authentic M-B wood trim, and comfy standard issue furniture, with optional leather upholstery in various colors. Outside, the front end gained a plastic body-color grille with matching headlamp surrounds and a new bumper with integral fog lamps. The taillamps were larger, and a fog lamp plus reverse lamps were integrated into the rear

Initially, the 460-series Mercedes-Benz G-Wagen was offered in the buyer's choice of two wheelbases and five different body styles: a cabriolet, short- and long-wheelbase wagons, and a panel van.

bumper. The exhaust pipe exited on the left side of the truck, in front of the rear wheel, and the fuel filler pipe was also on the side, rather than at the rear.

On the 463, permanent all-wheel drive was standard, with a lockable center differential transferring the power from front to rear. The front, center, and rear differential locks were operated by three switches on the dash—locking the center diff disabled the antilock braking, putting

more control in the hands of the driver in tough conditions.

Through the 1990s, M-B improved the 463 series, offering more powerful engines, including a 5-liter V-8, as well as some trim touches and niceties like cruise control, running boards, and a stainless spare wheel cover. The 463 series was also offered in a wide array of body styles including two-door cabriolet, three-door wagon, four-door pickup with six wheels,

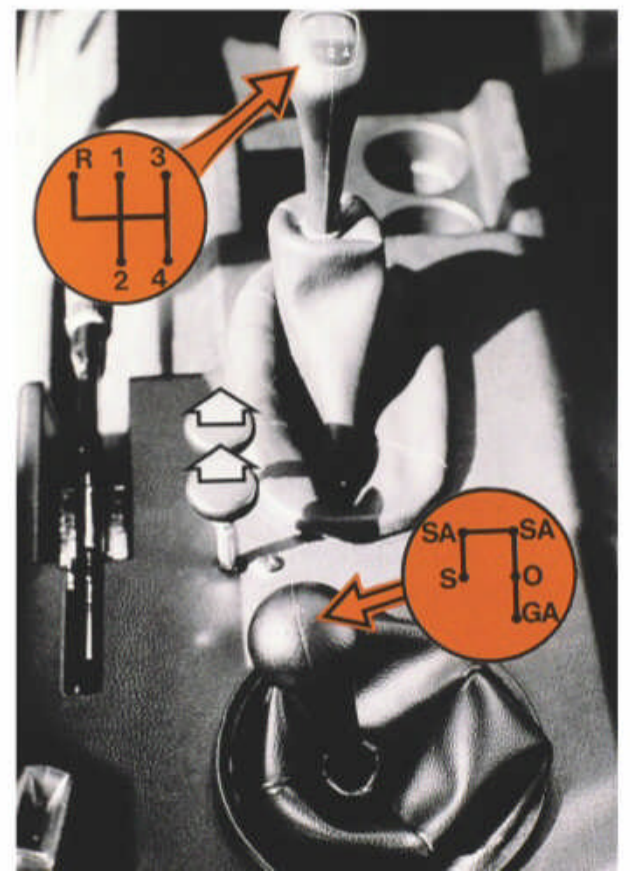


G-Wagens are expensive luxury items now, but this is how it began. The truck here is a 1980 short-wheelbase wagon with a 2.3-liter four, a four-speed manual, cloth buckets, and a steering wheel borrowed from Mercedes-Benz trucks. The diagram below shows the shift pattern and the transfer case operation: S is two-wheel drive, SA is four high, O is neutral, GA is four low. The two knobs operate the axle lockers.

long-wheelbase four-door cabriolet, five-door long-wheelbase wagon, and five-door wagon with widened track.

Grey-market imports of the G-Wagen were halted by 1987, but a U.S. company based in Santa Fe, New Mexico, went through all of the necessary work to legally import the G-Wagen by 1993 and sold them here for six-figure prices as a boutique item. The success (and profitability) of the G-Wagen in the U.S. sparked M-B to import it for the 2002 model year. It was offered only as a four-door with the 5.0-liter V-8. In 2004, M-B rolled out an AMG edition here, with a supercharged V-8, pumping the output up to 469 horsepower.

Subsequent versions have become even more extreme, luxurious, and expensive, attracting affluent buyers. M-B has never offered the sporty two-door or cabriolet versions — much less a stripped-down rig for off-roaders — in the U.S. Today, even older high-mileage examples command premium prices and rarely see the severe duty the original G-Wagen was designed for. 🚙



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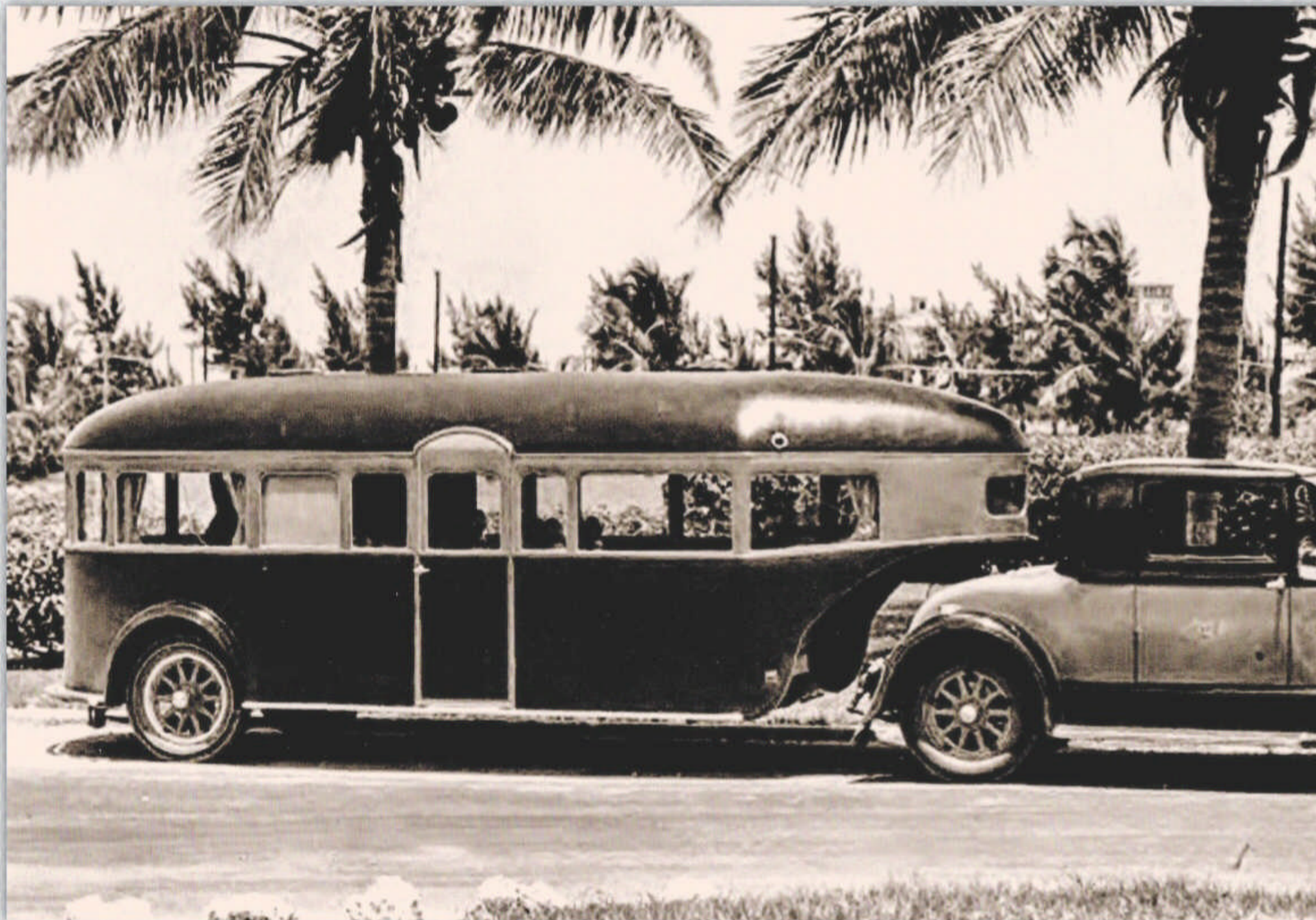
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Vintage Campers and Trailers

How “bread loaves,” “tin cans,” and “teardrops” shaped leisure travel

BY PATRICK FOSTER • ILLUSTRATIONS COURTESY OF THE PAT FOSTER COLLECTION

The next time you go to a big swap meet, look around at the vehicles that vendors bring to the show — chances are you’ll see more than a few vintage campers and trailers. It’s a growing part of the old-car hobby. Most vendors are old-car people (I count myself among their ranks) and many have decided that, since they need some sort of a camper/trailer to haul their stuff, as well as to sleep in overnight, they might as well make it a vintage camper. It’s a lot more fun that way.

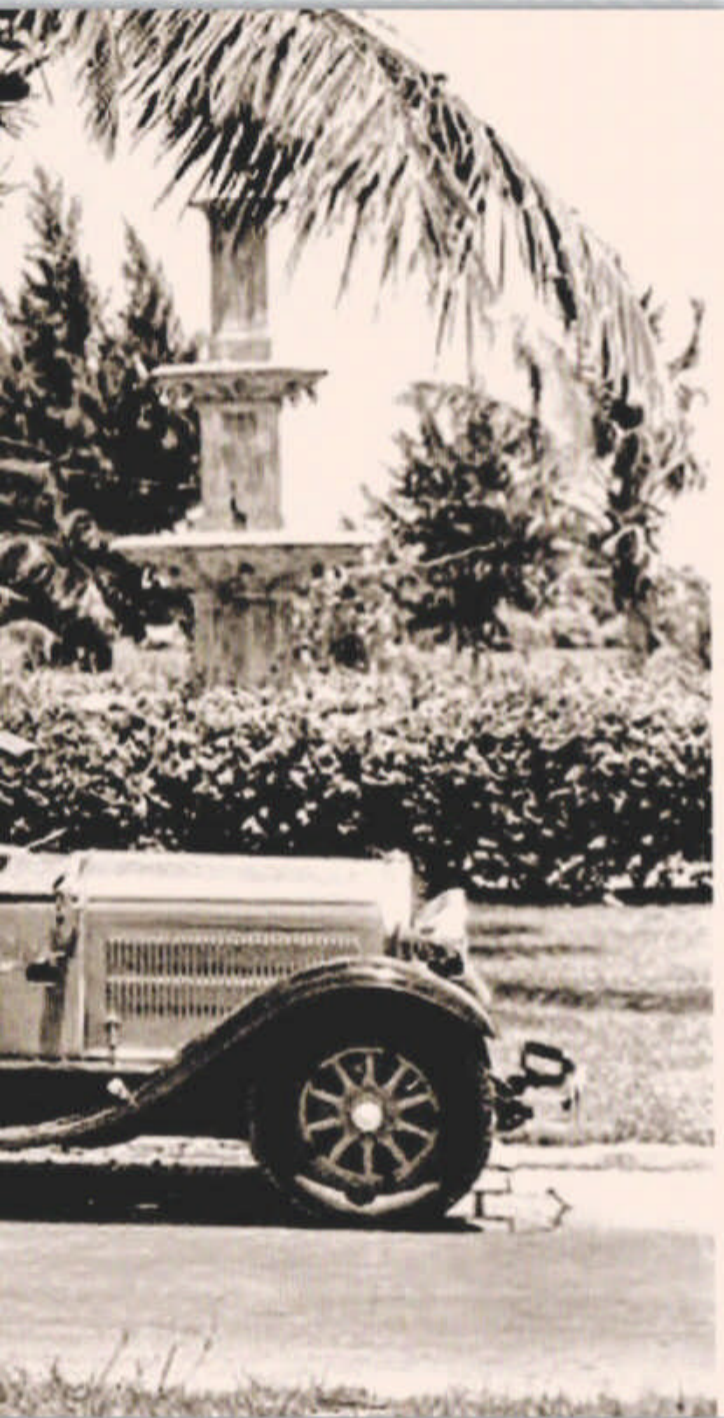
Of course, lots of people just prefer to go camping in a vintage camper rather

than a modern one. There are several clubs devoted to vintage camping.

As far as history, it’s doubtful anyone can pinpoint exactly when the first camper was introduced, though people have tried. Some claim the first camper was built in 1904 by a horseless carriage company and was specifically designed to be pulled by a Ford Model T. That’s a little hard to believe, since the Model T didn’t come out until 1908. Other people point to the 1910 Pierce-Arrow Touring Landau “camper car” that debuted at Madison Square Garden. The Landau boasted a fold-down rear roof section so passengers

could enjoy fresh air while touring. It was factory equipped with a back seat that folded into a bed, a chamber pot toilet, and a sink that folded down from the back of the driver’s seat. The driver was connected to his passengers via telephone! It was a handy vehicle to have in the days when “motor hotels” were rare.

It’s possible that 1910 was the first year that factory-built camp trailers were produced. Two firms are mentioned in books as having introduced campers that year: Los Angeles Trailer Works and Auto-Kamp Trailers. How many each built is unknown.



ABOVE: Neither a canned ham nor a teardrop, this circa 1916 camper trailer is of the parlor-car type, and is large, comfortable, and roomy. The unique fifth-wheel-style hook attachment was popular for a while on larger trailers.

Industry growth appears to have been fairly slow. By 1930, there were still only a mere 48 trailer manufacturers in the United States, and most of them were small, regional builders. Recreational camping in an enclosed vehicle was still a relatively new idea and was in its earliest days, the period when growth in any new industry is customarily rather lethargic. However, around 1931, camper sales began to really take off. Oddly enough, it was the Great Depression that proved to be a boon to trailer makers, as hundreds of thousands of Americans took to the road in search of opportunity or just a job.



ABOVE: A pair of mid-1930s canned-ham trailers in an idyllic setting illustrates the way camping used to be. **BELOW:** This 1935 Airstream has the classic teardrop shape so popular in the era of Art Deco and streamlining. The propane tank indicates it's probably equipped with lights and some sort of cookstove.



By 1937, the recreational camper industry had grown to more than 400 builders in the U.S. — nearly 10 times the number in 1930.

The industry leader back then was the Covered Wagon Company, which produced more than 10,000 trailers a year. There were good reasons for the manufacturer's success. The exterior design was an attractive, rectangular body, with rounded

corners and a unique roof featuring downward-heading "peaks" that imitated the look of the covered wagons of the Old West. In fact, the earliest Covered Wagon models featured an actual canvas top. They were usually fitted with generously large windows for a feeling of roominess and light, with nice quality interior fittings. And unlike some trailer manufacturers that used cheap plywood and Masonite construction,



This circa-1936 photo shows a large teardrop trailer stopping by a marina in Bay City, Michigan. Note the clean lines and stylish paint scheme.



The market leader during the 1930s was Covered Wagon; a 1936 model is seen here. A bread-loaf shape with rounded corners and the classic Covered Wagon roof styling make this easy to identify.

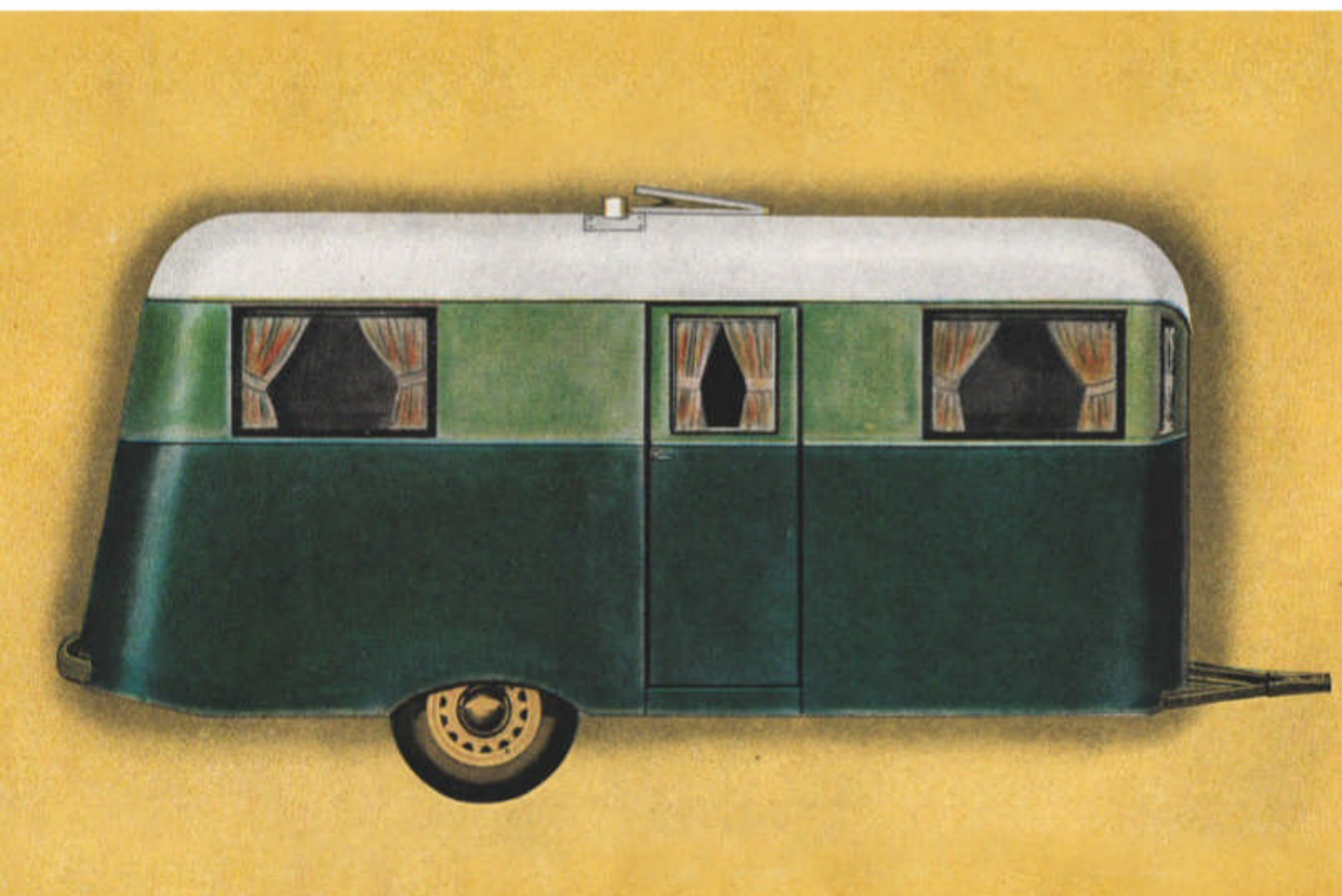
Covered Wagon boasted a steel-covered body with sturdy wood framing. World War II interrupted Covered Wagon's business, and soon after the war ended, the company faded away for reasons unknown. But Airstream, Winnebago, Shasta, and others took its place to become the best-sellers of the 1950s and 1960s.

Camper shapes and sizes vary and include "bread loaf" and "parlor car" styles, but perhaps the majority of older vintage campers can be categorized as either a "canned ham" (aka "tin can"), or

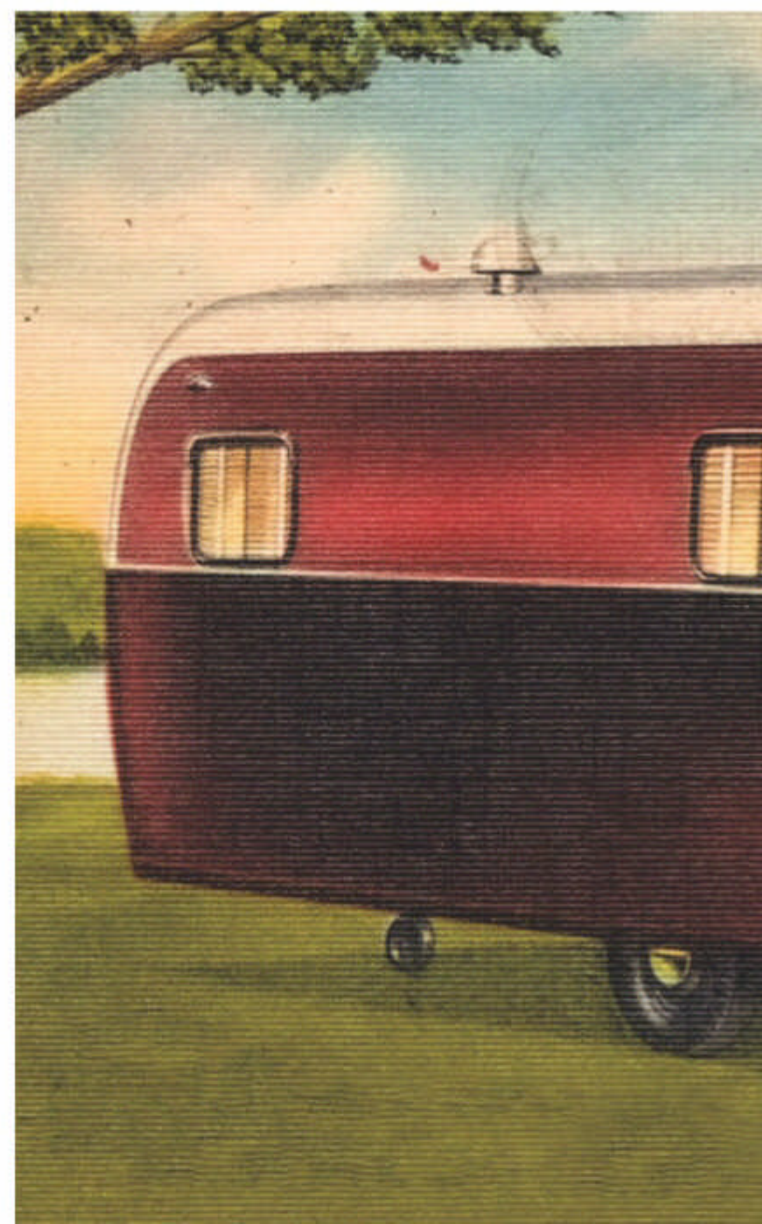
a "teardrop". A canned ham is a metal camper with the classic shape of a canned ham. Canned hams are among the most collectible vintage trailers because they look so cool. The retro shape and interior trim mean they're always in style because they're a little bit out of style. They stand out in a crowded camper park, so be prepared for lots of visitors anxious to get a look inside.

Notable brands include the Serro Scotty, those small but pretty campers with bright color schemes. Scottys are preferred

by folks who need a lightweight trailer because they lack a truck or car big enough to tow a larger trailer. Scottys don't take up much room in the driveway, and their well-arranged interiors usually include everything you need for comfy camping. A bonus: Due to their popularity, there are still a lot of Scottys around, so prices tend to be reasonable. Another popular brand is the aforementioned Shasta, which, like Serro Scotty, is still being made today. In the 1960s, Winnebago, better known for its larger campers, made a series of



Believe it or not, this lovely 1936 Covered Wagon Master Series trailer sold for just \$395, not counting the curtains (\$12 extra), rear bumper (\$10), or a two-burner cookstove (\$7 extra).





ABOVE: Canned ham and cheesecake? The Terry was a very popular canned-ham-style trailer. The three young ladies were crowned "Miss Trailer Show," "Miss Boat Show," and "Miss Sportsmen." Is it our imagination or are they triplets? **BELOW:** A cleanly styled 1950 Fleetwood canned-ham trailer is pulled by what appears to be a 1949 Plymouth convertible. The trailer was equipped with a double bed and a rudimentary galley. The location appears to be Florida. **BOTTOM:** A good example of a bread-loaf-style trailer is this large and very stylish 1948 Alma, which was produced in Alma, Michigan.



This photo came to us with no identification. The car is a 1957 Oldsmobile, but try as we might, we couldn't ID the brand of camper. Anyone out there know?



The U.S. Forest Service used Traveler trailers that were painted in its familiar shade of green. In this case, pulled by a 1959 Chevy Apache.

Tin Can Tourists

A CLUB CALLED THE TIN CAN TOURISTS WAS founded during 1919 in Desoto Park, Tampa, Florida. Its objective was "to unite fraternally all autocampers," a name given to folks who owned campers and trailers at the time. The club grew rapidly during the 1920s and 1930s. Though some towns shunned the Tin Can Tourists early on, once the Great Depression hit, various Florida communities actually began to compete for the privilege of having the Tin Can Tourists camp near their towns. They realized that having thousands of campers coming into town to purchase food and other supplies would provide a huge boost to the local economy.

small canned hams that were really nice. Boles-Aero made a lightweight aluminum-bodied tin can in the 1940s and 1950s; some people count them among the most beautiful trailers ever made.

Other vintage brands include Avalon, Aristocrat, Comet, Terry Rambler, Gypsy, Kenskill, Corvette, Jubilee, Price, Crown, Hanson, Forester, Cardinal, Dalton, Siesta, Little Caesar, Mercury, Little Gem, Aladdin, Yellowstone, Lakewood, De Ville, Vagabond, and dozens more.

The other type, wooden teardrop trailers, usually date from the 1920s to late 1930s. That's why they look the way they do—in the Art Deco period, aerodynamic streamlining was all the rage. Rounding off a trailer's front section and sloping the roofline back to the tail, in a teardrop shape, was considered the last word in modern design. Streamlining gave the trailer a futuristic look: sleek, efficient, and ultramodern. Added benefits were less aerodynamic drag at speed, so the tow car's engine didn't have to work so hard, and drivers could maintain a higher average speed.

Teardrop trailers were usually built with a hardwood frame covered in a light and inexpensive type of wood, like plywood. This helped keep trailer weight down—again, for the sake of the low-powered cars of the time—and made them relatively easy to assemble. This also makes them fairly simple to restore today. They also tend to be on the small side, because most cars of the 1920s and 1930s were comparatively light and without an excess of horsepower. For example, the Ford Model A, America's favorite car for a time, offered just 40 hp, and even the big 1932 Nash Ambassador produced only 125 hp.

As far as brands, there were many. In its early days, Airstream produced very pretty teardrop trailers made of wood, and these are highly prized today. One of our favorite teardrops is the plain-but-lovely 1940s Alcoa, which has a polished aluminum skin like an Airstream, but with a classic teardrop shape. Other brands include Benroy and Kamp Master.

People who traveled in those early campers came to be known as "Tin Can Tourists," a slang reference to the canned food they brought along on trips. Provisions had to be canned because the early camp trailers didn't have proper refrigeration—heck, many of them didn't even have toilets. So, owners brought lots of canned goods and purchased milk, eggs, and other fresh essentials along the trip. 🐾





ABOVE: One of the best-looking camper trailers was the 1960 Holiday House. With large wraparound windows and bright sides accented with a pink upper half, this was the height of style. **LEFT:** One of the draws of owning a big Airstream trailer is the interior roominess and quality of furnishings, as seen in this mid-1960s Airstream. **BOTTOM:** Smaller cars can only haul smaller trailers, or else they're subject to "the tail wagging the dog" on windy highways. This circa-1961 Airstream Bambi is a perfect unit for those wanting comfort and style in a smaller package.



Guide to Vintage Trailers

THINKING OF POSSIBLY GETTING INTO THE VINTAGE CAMPER HOBBY? THERE ARE LITERALLY hundreds of vintage trailer and campers brands to choose from. Listed here are some of particular interest:

Airfloat: Produced from 1930 to 1957, these stylish vehicles usually sported round windows and door openings like a cruise liner. Luxurious and commodious, they came in lengths up to a whopping 45 feet long!

Aladdin: Built from 1963 to about 1973, Aladdin offered "a magic carpet to Vacationland." These are mostly tin-can types; they've got interesting styling.

Bee-Line: With classic canned-ham styling and bumblebee yellow-and-black paint schemes, these were smaller trailers aimed at weekenders.

Elcar: These were produced in Elkhart, Indiana, from 1936 clear into the later 1960s. Early models are easily mistaken for Covered Wagon trailers, while later ones used more unique styling that's hard to categorize.

Fleetwood: Lasting more than 50 years in business, Fleetwood built canned hams mainly in the smaller sizes. Larger units were sold under the Prowler, Terry Coach, Wilderness, Taurus, and Avion brand names.

Go Tag-A-Long: This was a very popular brand from 1964 to 1988, building canned hams with a unique trunk bump-out and turquoise and white paint scheme.

Haynes: After the Great Depression hit, automobile body maker Haynes went into production of handsome trailers, styled similar to the top-selling Covered Wagon. These are extremely well-built and highly desirable.

Kit: Kit Trailers were teardrop shaped and ran in size from 11 to nearly 20 feet, and they always boasted good styling. Its first products were small teardrop trailers designed to hold camping equipment.

Palace: Classic design with up to three bedrooms, Palace trailers boasted breadbox styling and, after World War II, an aluminum body.

Roadmaster: Looking for large size and sweet styling? The Roadmaster, built from the 1930s to the 1950s, offered units from 20 to 35 feet, custom birch interiors and a "skylight living room."

Spartan: There's nothing Spartan about the Spartan! This company was owned by J. Paul Getty, and produced large trailers from 20 up to 45 feet long. Introduced in 1945, Spartan trailers were in production until 1961.

Vagabond: Built from 1931 to the late 1960s, these are marvelous trailers. Prewar models have excellent breadbox styling, while the post-WWII models have that Fabulous 1950s look.

Of course, you always have the option of buying a nice used camper of more recent age, but with vintage styling. A few short years ago, longtime camper manufacturer Shasta produced a replica of its classic 1961 model, right down to the two-tone paint. Although no longer in production, used models come up for sale occasionally and make a dandy camper with vintage looks and modern conveniences. The same is true of the CH Camper, a company which apparently is no longer in business. It produced an attractive replica of a circa 1950s-1960s small canned-ham-style trailer.

Which is the better way to go, vintage or replica? That's up to you. Good hunting!



spotlight
cadillac classics



You Don't Bring Me Flowers

This 1978 McClain-converted flower car brought one owner's Cadillac obsession to life

BY JEFF KOCH • PHOTOGRAPHY BY MATTHEW LITWIN



Earle Witcher of Chester, New Hampshire, was a Chevy guy—but he didn't have anything fun to take to car shows. "Cadillacs always appealed to me, but I could never afford one. Then, in 2004, my friend Bob Quimby got me into going to cruise nights. When he turned up in his El Camino and I saw that he was having fun, and I wasn't, I was jealous!" And so, following Erica Jong's philosophy that jealousy is all the fun you think they had, Earle set out to find himself a car.



After years of Bowtie fealty, he thought maybe the time was right to step up into a Cadillac. "I'd always wanted a hearse," Earle confesses. "But I had to run it past my wife. In 42 years of marriage, she's said 'no' just three times. That was one of them, and by then I'd learned to respect the 'no.'"

He quickly pivoted to the notion of finding a flower car—a Cadillac-based equivalent to buddy Bob's Elky, but with a stainless-steel bed designed to haul exquisite topiary arrangements, rather than the earthly remains of the deceased. "I explained to her that it didn't haul bodies, just flowers to the gravesite. She was okay with that." Never mind that in days of antiquity, flowers were used to help mask the odors of decomposition; today, they're meant as gestures of respect for the deceased and comfort and sympathy for the living.

Then there was the issue of actually finding a flower car. "Little did I know at the time, a flower car is the rarest and hardest to find of all of the funeral vehicles. Members of PCS [the Professional Car Society] have told me that they made flower cars in roughly a 1:20 ratio compared to hearses," Earle explains. And while flower cars are still built today, their numbers continue to dwindle; they are largely manufactured to order. "I learned that in the late '70s, they almost stopped making flower cars completely. Cemeteries changed the rules by limiting the number of floral arrangements allowed at gravesites, to reduce labor costs incurred for disposal later. If you're only bringing one

or two arrangements with you, you don't need a whole car for that." Mix in Earle's lack of prowess in an online environment, and things could have reached a dead end (pun not intended) sooner rather than later.

But, Earle mentioned his flower-car interest to a work buddy, who happened to trip across one a few days after in an online auction; it was in Port Ritchie, Florida. "And three days later, I owned it! I borrowed a friend's trailer and took it home. Within 10 days of saying that I'm looking for one, it was in my yard." A decade and a half since, he still sounds amazed by his luck. "I mean, I didn't even try that hard!"

What he ended up with was a McClain-converted 1978 Coupe de Ville flower car, with 26,000 miles showing on the odometer. "McClain Coachbuilders of Anderson, Indiana, was a dealer for S&S; they bought a Coupe de Ville and did the conversion themselves. McClain made one flower car for 1978—this is it. McClain wasn't an esteemed coachbuilder like Hess & Eisenhardt, or S&S, or Miller-Meteor. This one is not looked down on, but it's not looked upon in such esteem as a coachbuilt model might be. Forty years down the road, the McClain name doesn't invoke the awe that, say, Scoville might. It's also not on a commercial chassis, so in some circles I'm accused of having a 'baby Cadillac.' But the previous owners took really good care of it; it lived its life under a cover, it was nearly rust-free, and a good solid car to start with. It way exceeded my expectations."

Exceeding expectations was Cadillac's *raison d'être*. The division celebrated its 75th anniversary with an all-new, smaller Coupe de Ville in 1977: it had 8.5 inches of wheelbase excised, 9.5 inches of overall length removed, and weighed a whopping 950 pounds less than the '76. Yet, thanks in part to a 3-inch-taller greenhouse, the new Cadillac offered more headroom and legroom, not to mention more trunk space. The new 7.0-liter (425-cu.in.) V-8 was related to the outgoing 500-cu.in. beast, and with 8.2:1 compression it was rated at 180 horsepower



at 4,000 rpm — with 320 lb-ft of torque at 2,000 rpm. What's more, it still looked and felt like a Cadillac, with an upright grille, stand-up hood ornament, ample use of chrome trim, and a certain stylistic formality that the Cadillac customer demanded. And it captured the mood of the moment: model-year production of 358,487 total cars set a divisional record. With such a comprehensive makeover for 1977, Cadillac took a breath for

The McClain flower car started as a standard Coupe de Ville, and so was liberally festooned with power options. A judge marked the car down at a show for not having a spare, so the owner found a spot to mount it behind the seat.



1978 and introduced a revised grille, new rear bumper ends, a recalibrated transmission, new electronic leveling control with suspension-mounted sensors and rear air shocks, retuned body mounts, and other minor changes. Cadillac built 349,684 cars for 1978, with Coupe de Ville production at 117,750.

Once the flower car was in the yard, Mrs. Whitcher came on board. "She enjoyed it once she realized that it wasn't a hearse. At local shows, we display it with artificial flower arrangements, and she helps me get the flowers set up. At regular shows — Cadillac shows, Professional Car Society shows — the judges don't want to see that. But at local cruise nights, or the Lions Club show, it's a big hit." And Earle enjoyed hanging out with his buddy, Bob. Until he couldn't anymore.

Bob passed in 2008, and it's safe to say that Earle had a confidence crisis. "I was gonna sell it. It wasn't fun anymore." And then, one of those small-world happenstances occurred. "Bob's funeral had a flower car, and I got talking to the driver. Suddenly, he asks me, 'Are you the guy with the McClain?'" Earle took it as a sign: He was not only going to keep his flower car, but he was going to bring it back to its former glory. Or better. "I was inspired to put some work into it and turn it into what it has become. It was such a good starting point, and I was confident that I could make it better than when I started."

That confidence came because Earle was under no illusions — he calls McClain's conversion a "glorified, up-graded backyard project." "The roof was cut off behind the front seat with a Sawzall." A Sawzall? "When I replaced the vinyl top," Earle says, "I saw the marks where they cut. So, the trunk and back seat were gone, replaced by formed stainless sheets. They devised a bulkhead to close the cab from the outside. The back of it looks like an El Camino, except there's no tailgate — just where the trunk would have closed. The new roofline came down at an angle so that it blends into the rear. The bed was built entirely from stainless. All done in-house by McClain."

But it was during a light freshening that Earle saw how



I'd always wanted a hearse, but I had to run it past my wife. In 42 years of marriage, she's said 'no' just three times.

That was one of them, and by then I'd learned to respect the 'no.'

things came together. "McClain was known for making it as inexpensive for its customers as possible, and I've attempted to correct some of its shortcuts." Such as? "I replaced the plexiglass backlight with some tinted safety glass. The stainless bed looked great, but McClain used steel rivets to secure it and they looked rusty, so I removed them and replaced them with stainless rivets. The bed tiedown rails were originally towel racks, so I went to a marine-supply store and got stainless rails and stanchions. The drainage hole in the bed was blocked with a rusty piece of iron; I found a round piece of stainless and had the McClain name cut into it. The bulkhead was just a piece of black cloth stapled in that flapped in the breeze. It's carpeted now, to look a little more finished."

But under the hood remains the original, unfussed-with, 26,000-mile 425-cu.in. Cadillac V-8. "The only things not factory-stock are the battery, belts, and the air cleaner intake hose. Everything else is as it came out of the factory. It's not pretty — it hasn't been fixed up and chromed. It's clean, but not sparkly. And nothing's been altered. Beyond that, I just keep it clean." Earle boasts of show judges at Cadillac and PCS events alike marveling at its originality — all of the factory-installed clamps, hoses, and markings intact.

In the years since, he's dived headlong into the Cadillac life and expanded his collection. He is the second owner of a 40,000-mile, 1979 Coupe de Ville in Firemist Green, identical to the one that appeared in that year's dealer brochure. He daily drove a series of Cadillac STS sedans — the model that followed on from the 1992-up Seville — and states that he'd rather take one of those through a brutal New Hampshire winter than his 4x4 truck. He's the second owner of a '92 Allanté, which he calls "the most fun of all of my Cadillacs." And he's got an '85 six-door, nine-passenger limousine on deck as his next project.

But, it was this one-of-one 1978 flower-car conversion, and the good times he had with both his wife and his fallen friend, that started Earle down the Cadillac path. "I fell hard for Cadillac," he admitted. "And they haven't let me down." 🐾



Cadillac's downsized-for-1977 425-cu.in. engine has the same basic bones as the big 500 from just a few years earlier. This 26,000-mile example retains all of the correct clips and hoses it came with from the factory.

Taking the Helm of the *Flying Lady*

MY DAD WAS A CAREER SOLDIER IN the U.S. Army, stationed in what was then called West Germany. By the time that I joined the family circle, he was stationed in Bremerhaven, on the North Sea coast. Subsequently, I spent the majority of my childhood in Europe. I only came to the United States twice in my first 15 years, and when I finally moved Stateside for good I was nearly 16 years old.

Growing up in Germany was alright. I had very close contact with my German maternal grandparents, and I also became fluent in the language. One downside was the restrictions placed on juvenile drivers in Europe. Even at 16, I would only have been rated to drive small motorcycles there. So I was quite thrilled to learn that, at home in Arkansas, I would be able to obtain my driver's license at 16. What a wonderful country! As such, my dad bought me my first car for my birthday. It was a white 1959 Chevrolet Impala four-door sedan that already had over 150,000 miles on the odometer, and was, by most standards of the day, fully worn out. I thought it was the greatest car in the world. It was mine. While my buddies in Germany still made do with their 50-cc mopeds, I had a full-size car with a 283-cu.in. V-8 engine. How cool was that?

The Impala had previously been owned by an elderly lady. Only the driver's seat showed any sign of wear. The brocade style upholstery elsewhere in the car looked brand new, until the first time my buddies sat on it and it ripped across like so much papier mâché. The Impala had no options or upgrades other than the V-8. It had "armstrong" manual steering and standard brakes, no air conditioning, and no radio of any kind. The car was absolutely bare bones.

A quick trip to the local auto salvage yard produced a factory AM radio with twin slanted antennas, topped off with an aftermarket FM converter. Fitted under the dash in short order was a state-of-the-art 8-track tape player, paired to a set of stereo speakers that I installed in

the rear deck. Now I had all the tunes that I wanted.

In those days, a 14-year-old four-door Chevrolet was far from the cool muscle cars that were already in high demand. Especially my side-finned '59, which was thought of as the ugly duckling of all '50s Chevys. Oh, how times have changed.

Within the first year, I talked my dad into having the 283 V-8 rebuilt, and I ended up getting the car repainted in ice-box white. She looked really good.

Once I had my own car, going to high school was no longer dreaded. During the summer of '74, I took a job on a nearby ranch that earned me enough money for gas. At the end of the summer I was able to buy myself a brand-new 23-channel citizens band radio that I installed in my *Flying Lady*, along with the necessary six-foot whip antenna mounted to the rear bumper.

One morning, on my way to pick up two friends who I carpooled to school with, driving due east and straight into the morning sun, I failed to see a farm truck coming around a curve. The '59 was a heavy car, but not as heavy as the pickup fully loaded with hay. The collision all but tore the left side of the front bumper off my car. The farm truck later drove away with just a long scratch down the driver's side. My school bus driver had a repair business on the side and offered to fix my car for \$150. My dad was quick to explain that since I tore the Impala up, I also had to pay for fixing it. I was sad to have to sell my new CB radio to afford it.

Coming of age in the late '60s and

early '70s, car-wise, I became enamored with the full-size American cars of that era. After growing up with VWs and Opels and having ridden in BMW Isettas, as well as the original Fiat 500s, I was more than impressed with the cars that I encountered back here in the States. I fondly remember big iron like the Pontiac Catalina, Chrysler New Yorker, Cadillac Fleetwood, and especially the great Lincoln Continentals of the early '70s.

When we were young, we had to give up what we owned in order to be able to get anything else our hearts desired. After I had driven the Impala 33,000 loyal miles, the older brother of a classmate of mine was interested in buying my car. Fatefully, at the same time another buddy was looking to sell his 1968 four-door hardtop Oldsmobile Delta 88. As I said hello to my new car, I had to wave goodbye to the old '59. I saw it around for another year or so, and then it was gone forever.

Once in a while, I come across a set of those unique teardrop-shaped tail-lamps on another winged Chevrolet at a car show, and I can still feel the joy that I experienced when I got into my very own first car. 🚗





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Modern Classics on the Move

Eighties vehicles inspire bids and discussions at Hemmings Auctions

IT'S SURPRISING FOR THOSE OF US OF "A CERTAIN AGE" TO REMEMBER that the 1980s ended 32 years ago... where has the time gone? The cars and trucks of that decade have a unique appeal for enthusiasts who grew up with them, or simply appreciate the fresh, unique design trends and ever-improving performance they represented, compared to those built slightly earlier. Eighties vehicles have long been the "next big thing" in the old-car hobby, and as recent trends at hemmingsauctions.com have proven, their time is now.

"The appeal of these cars likely comes from a variety of factors," muses Hemmings Auctions Editor Terry Shea. "Nostalgia, from a group of people who now have the means to purchase their dream cars from childhood; fuel-injected, electronically controlled drivelines offering reliability lacking in cars just a few years older;

and modern conveniences that match many new cars. Whatever the motivation, we've seen entry-level collectibles cross Hemmings' virtual block in the form of low-mileage American luxury models, European performance coupes and sedans, and even uncommon models like the De Lorean."

Among the noteworthy Eighties dream rides were a 16,901-mile '86 Cadillac Coupe de Ville (\$12,338), a 5.0 V-8-powered 1988 Ford Thunderbird (rust-free, no reserve, \$2,700), a 1985 Chrysler Laser XE Turbo (five-speed, no reserve, \$4,000), and a 1984 Mercedes-Benz 380 SE (40,207 miles, \$22,050). Rad collectibles from earlier decades included a 1936 Packard 120 Touring Sedan (\$28,088), a 1941 Chrysler Windsor coupe (\$49,350), and a customized 1950 Hudson Pacemaker Deluxe convertible (\$34,125).



1988 BUICK

Model: Reatta
Reserve: None

Selling Price: \$7,000
Recent Market Range: N/A

It's not often that a primo example of Buick's sporty two-seater hits the market, as many Reattas were simply used up, the sad result of their well-tuned comfort and long-term reliability. This first-year example, with the famous touch-screen digital dash, had just over 72,000 miles on the odometer, and was said to run and drive without issue. It appeared in fine cosmetic shape, too, with only minor undercarriage surface rust and few body blemishes, and a promise of all lighting and interior systems functioning. This no-reserve Reatta sold well after a healthy 10 bids came in on its final auction day.



1981 DMC

Model: De Lorean
Reserve: \$33,000

Selling Price: \$46,725
Recent Market Range: \$31,350-\$42,450

Forty years and fewer than 50,000 miles were seemingly all that separated this five-speed DMC De Lorean from new. A full accounting of its history was included, and minor modifications to improve stance, reliability, and correct original-build defects were divulged, including refinishing of the front and rear fascias. Spare parts, including new seals and a piece of glass, were included so the buyer could replace imperfect originals. Minor issues included driver's-seat bolster wear and a spot of battery-acid-damaged carpeting. Numerous videos and photos, along with ample paperwork, made this an easy deal.

LEGEND

Reserve: Minimum price owner will accept

Selling Price*: What the vehicle sold for, inclusive of buyer's 5-percent fee
(*sold as a Premium Classified following the live auction)

Recent Market Range: The low-to-high value range for the vehicle based on published results of similar vehicles sold at auction over the previous 18 months

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1982 MERCEDES-BENZ

Model: 240 D

Reserve: \$26,000

Selling Price: \$28,245

Recent Market Range: \$25,150-\$35,510

The W123-chassis Mercedes-Benz is legendary for its build quality and durability, and diesel-fueled variants are even more so. This 1982 240 D appeared in incredible shape, with a mere 24,900 miles having passed under its tires. A four-speed manual transmission made the most of its under-stressed, naturally aspirated 67-hp four-cylinder engine, and the undercarriage appeared as spotless as the Ivory paint— noted to include a resprayed/blended section of driver's door—and Sienna (brown) MB-Tex upholstery. The original window sticker, included in the documents, showed a \$23,615 MSRP that was handily exceeded.



1985 BMW

Model: M6

Reserve: \$39,000

Selling Price: \$42,525

Recent Market Range: \$35,350-\$50,250

BMW's early M cars were typically detuned to meet U.S. emissions and economy standards, leaving American enthusiasts with slightly milder versions. This sub-115,000-mile M6 was a European model built two years before the 256-hp U.S.-spec car debuted, and it promised full-fat, 286-hp performance. Small bumpers, yellow headlamps, and 16-inch Alpina alloys set the Cinnabar Red over Pearl Beige leather car apart, that paint said to be a quality respray. A complete tool kit, functional A/C, and recent OEM exhaust system replacement were icing on the cake. It took 14 bids to send this M6 to a new home.

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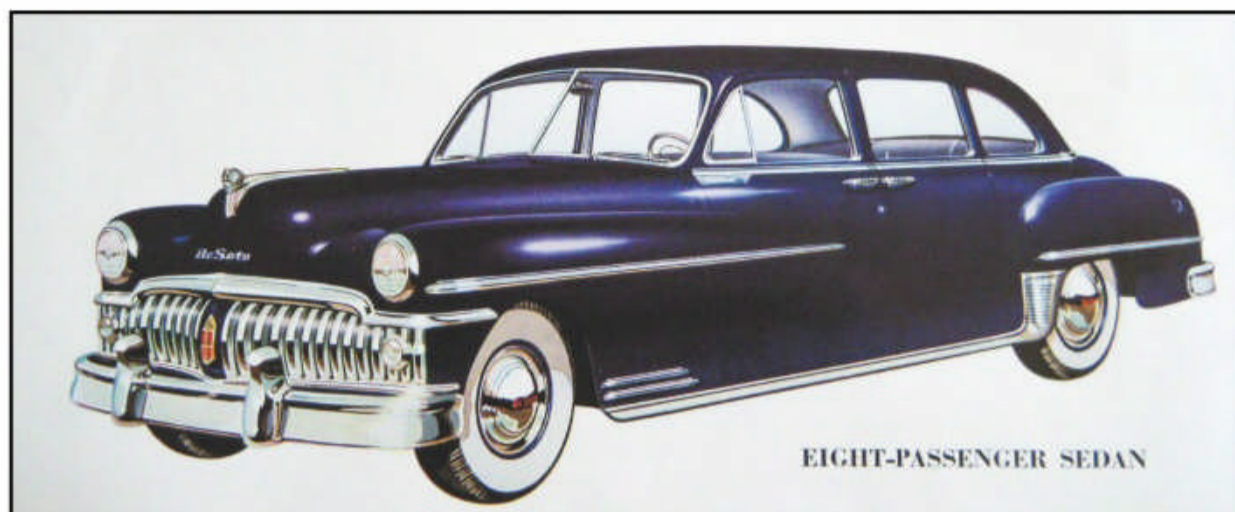
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DE SOTO HAS UNDERGONE A MINOR REDESIGN IN THE FRONT WITH MINIMAL CHANGES in the sheetmetal. It combines luxury with easy-to-use engineering including no-shift driving provided by Tip-Toe Hydraulic Shift and gýrol Fluid Drive. Each is powered by a high-compression Power Master engine built for acceleration and long service life. Ten new Deluxe and Custom models are available; bring one home at a starting price of \$1,976.

SALES RACE

(total model-year production)

1. Chevrolet 1,498,590
2. Ford 1,208,912
3. Plymouth 610,954
4. Buick 588,439
5. Pontiac 446,429
6. Oldsmobile 408,060
7. Dodge 341,797
8. Studebaker 320,884
9. Mercury 293,658
10. Chrysler 179,299



CADILLAC'S SERIES 62 IS AVAILABLE IN FOUR body styles to meet every taste and requirement of today's drivers. Sleek, dynamic, and beautiful, you can expect Cadillac's highest standard of quality throughout, from the smooth and powerful V-8 engine to the Fisher coachwork and the interior styling by Fleetwood. The Series 62 comes with Hydra-Matic drive and power windows, and it's now available starting at \$3,150.

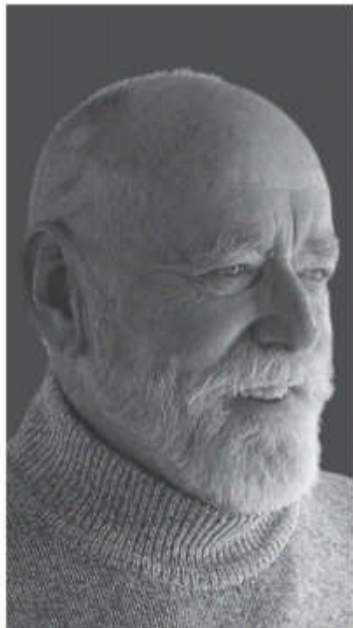
FACTORY PRICES

(limos excluded)

Buick	\$1,803-\$3,407
Cadillac	\$2,761-\$4,959
Chevrolet.....	\$1,329-\$1,994
Chrysler.....	\$2,114-\$4,003
De Soto	\$1,976-\$3,179
Dodge	\$1,611-\$2,865
Ford.....	\$1,333-\$2,107
Hudson	\$1,807-\$2,893
Imperial	\$3,055-\$5,229
Lincoln.....	\$2,529-\$3,950
Mercury	\$1,875-\$3,412
Nash	\$1,633-\$2,223
Oldsmobile.....	\$1,615-\$2,615
Packard	\$2,224-\$4,250
Plymouth.....	\$1,371-\$2,372
Pontiac.....	\$1,571-\$2,411
Studebaker.....	\$1,419-\$2,328



KAISER IS BACK AND HAS PROVEN ITSELF in a little over three years with sales eclipsing nearly 400,000 units. Available in two series, the Special and Deluxe, you'll see a tasteful design with several available colors and glittering chrome. Inside, driver and passengers will enjoy roominess, wide views, and several comfortable fabrics to choose from. Combined with Kaiser's riding comfort and unique engineering, you'll find the Kaiser to be a versatile and functional car for years to come. Available for as low as \$1,995.



A Short Course in Automotive Wiring

I learned early that leaving faulty wiring in an old car can be catastrophic. As it happens, I was driving my '49 Chevy Fleetline sedan over to pick up my girlfriend to go to the movies. I pushed in the cigar lighter and shook a Marlboro out of the pack. I was 18 years old at the time. It seemed like the lighter was taking forever to heat up, and then I smelled something like burning rubber. It got worse. Rapidly. My headlights blinked, and then went out, along with the dash lights.

I didn't have a fire extinguisher, nor did it occur to me to shut off the ignition right away. I managed to pull over and stumbled out coughing. And then I walked home to call my girlfriend with the news. The next day a buddy and I towed the car to my place, and I took a look under the scorched dash. It was a mess of bare wire and charred insulation. I ended up junking the car. It wasn't a big loss, because I had only paid \$35 for it, and the junkyard gave me \$10 to take it away. But the incident made me realize how much damage faulty wiring could do.

All these years later, my friend Ivan, who is restoring a 1937 Willys four-door sedan, discovered that its wiring was little more than a memory. Car wiring from the Thirties was coated with natural rubber, then wrapped with cotton thread and given a coat of shellac. As a result, it was eminently perishable. The wiring in more modern cars is coated with plastic to keep it from shorting out, but that gets hard and brittle after 50 years of use, too.

Ivan had just received his new, original-type harness from YnZ's Yesterdays Parts in Redlands, California, and asked me to help him install it. Willys built simple cars, so it only took us an afternoon to put the harness in. If it had been a 1959 Cadillac, we would probably still be working on it.

Ivan's Willys is negative to ground, but many cars of the era are the opposite, so if you decide to rewire your classic make sure you know which way it is wired. We pulled the old harness out through the firewall and laid it out on his driveway, alongside the new one, to make sure they were the same. Then we went to work. We gathered some screwdrivers, a pocketknife, and a multimeter (they come with instructions on how to use them). But before

we began hooking up wires, we brightened all the connections with sandpaper and the pocketknife. This is especially important with six-volt systems.

We started at the dash and fed the new harness through the firewall. We put in fresh rubber grommets to prevent chafing, and made sure the wires were routed through the car as they were originally. After that, we started hooking up the instruments in the dash and reinstalling them. The wires were numbered, so we only needed to go down the list that was furnished. We had a wiring diagram as well, so we could make sense of what we were doing.

We put a little white dielectric grease on each connection after it was tightened into place in order to prevent corrosion, and when we were finished, we polarized the generator per the instructions in the shop manual. This is an important step.

After that, we closed the garage door to dim the light, and hooked up the negative lead to the battery. Next, we just touched the positive cable to its terminal a couple of times to see if we got a spark. We did not, but if we had, we would have checked to make sure everything was turned off, and that there were no short circuits.

Finally, we checked the lights, windshield wipers, and dash gauges to make sure they were all working. We then lit off the little Willys Go Devil four-banger and took the car for a spin. Ivan breathed a sigh of relief, knowing that his beautiful five-year restoration would not go up in smoke when he least expected it.

The reason I share this tidbit from my unremarkable life: If it saves one classic from a fiery fate, it will be worth relating. I have rewired a 1940 Packard, 1955 Chevrolet, 1970 Volkswagen, and 1966 Morris Minor, and none of them took more than a day or two from start to finish. A few hand tools and a little patience were all that were required to make them safe again.

So, while you are sequestered at home riding out this COVID-19 pandemic, now might be a good time to go to the garage and do the same to your classic. It might just save you from the heartbreak of a dash fire or worse... like having to call your main squeeze to beg off from a dinner date. 🙏



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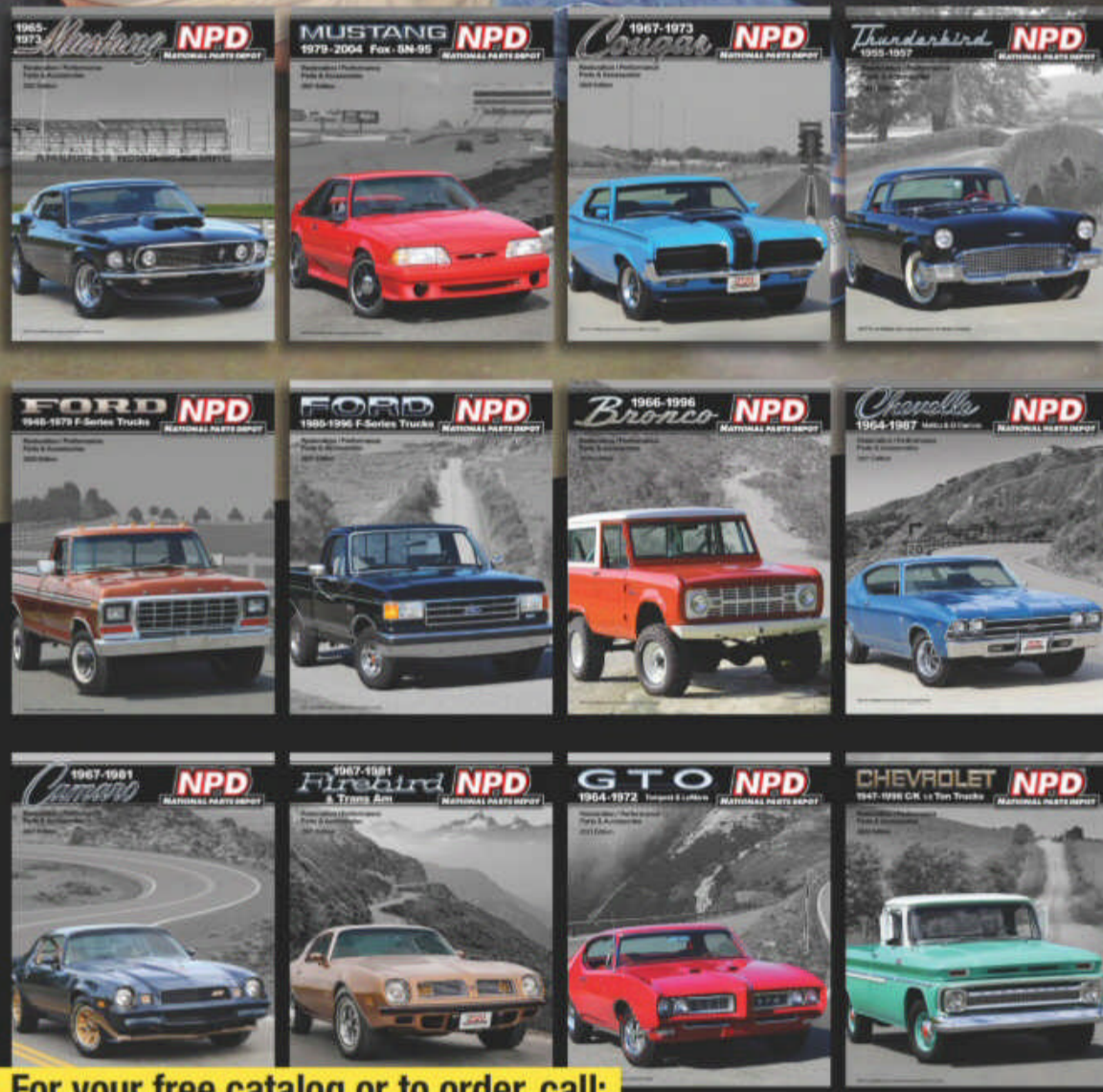
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