



# HCFI NEWSLETTER

Major support by the Ellen Browning Scripps Foundation

Spring 2014

“The Information Place”

Volume 16 #2

## Auto Design & Coach Building

In the past several articles presented through the newsletter, we have explored the historical aspects of many technologies developed within the realm of the automobile and its close relatives (the wood-spoke wheel of the horse-drawn carriage, for instance), and while technological breakthroughs and their origins are both interesting and vast in their intricacies and histories, it is the esthetic value of the automobile that I will focus on in this issue – the designs and designers of some of history’s most beloved and noteworthy cars in particular.

Prior to delving into such fertile subject matter, it should be noted that given the sheer volume of automobile designers and companies, I plan to focus in detail on a precious few of them here. The silver lining is that if you are intrigued by the subject matter to the point of further investigation, the library can certainly pacify your curiosities, so you can take some comfort in that, right?

### THE GRAND ROUTIERI (FRANCE)

A collection of French coachbuilders catering to the ultra-rich, the Grand Routieri specialized in the elegant and the extravagant. The Routieri included the cream of the crop in French coach building with names such as Soutchik, Faget, Varnet, Franay, Pourtout, as well as Figoni and Falaschi; most of whom would enjoy great successes even after the advent of more economical yet stylish cars in the early thirties were introduced, signaling the beginning of the end of custom coach building on a grand scale. A luxury automobile tax in France in the 1950’s all but sealed their fate, but in an age where the norm meant ordering chassis and body from different companies, the rich demanded style and ornamented bodywork; usually translating to cars that were luxurious, but lethargic and heavy. The top names in chassis de-



1951 Bugatti by Saoutchik

signs that were ordering bodies from the Routieri included the likes of Bugatti, Delahaye, and Talbot. The collective focus tended to be the illusion of motion while standing still – bold, flowing exterior lines and daring flare and teardrop designs (primarily influenced by Figoni, Falaschi, and Soutchik).

### THE ITALIANS

After the demise of the Routieri era (brought about by the introduction of the 1934 Citroen 7, aka the ‘Light 15’), the coach builders in Italy seemed to have had their fingers on the pulse of where the industry was headed - insofar as the trend of automobile of design within the specialized sector- in stark contrast to the French. As a result, by the time that

### Up Coming Events

- June 28 Orange County Model T Ford Club Swap Meet at El Dorado High School, Placentia, CA
- June 29: Book Sales at Automobile Driving Museum, El Segundo, CA
- July 26: Long Beach Model T Ford Club Swap Meet at Los Alamitos Race Course, CA
- September 21: Dana Point Concourse d'Elegance, St. Regis Monarch Beach Resort, Dana Point, CA
- September 28: Santa Fe Concorso, at The Club at Las Campanas, Santa Fe, NM
- October 8 to 11: Hershey Fall Swap Meet, Hershey, PA
- October 26: Car Classic 2014 — Art Center College of Design, Pasadena, CA

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## Auto Design & Coach Building *Continued from page 1*



1934 Citroen 7

American-influenced vehicles and mass-market designs were becoming en vogue, Italian coachbuilders were already riding the wave.

Focusing on developing technologies born during WWII like metallurgy, mechanics, and aerodynamics, Italian designers like Ghia and Pinin Farina took building



Lancia Aurelia B20

bodies for such chassis makers as Alfa Romeo, Fiat, Lancia, Peugeot and Renault and brought fresh ideas and released what seemed to be a wave of creativity in post-war Italy. It could be argued that the Lancia Aurelia B20 and the Cisitalia 202 were the frontrunners that changed coupe design forever. Italy boasts a rich history of coach builders and stylized sports cars, and the



1980 Ferrari 208 GTB and GTS

staggering number of companies that built bodies for Panhard, Ferrari, Alfa Romeo, Fiat, Maserati, Abarth, and Aston-Martin could literally take up a paragraph of its own. Some of the most noteworthy that deserve mention here are Allemano, Bertone, Boano, Castagna, Drogo, Frua, and Touring.

Hamshaw, Hooper & Co., Mulliner & Co., Park Ward, and Thrupp & Maberly. It wasn't just the royalty of Britain that associated with UK coach builders; crowns from all around Europe, the Middle East, and Asia all commissioned British coaches, and they almost always were fitted onto the noble chassis of Rolls-Royce, Bentley, Daimler, and Mercedes-Benz.

The advent of youth pop culture in the late Fifties and its influence on what was initially a market geared toward the austere and utilitarian in England (undeniably due

### THE BRITISH

Coach building in Britain was already an art form by the time the horseless carriage came to fruition. Coaches were commissioned by British royalty for generations, and when motor coaches were introduced, the British were at the forefront, touting such names as Abbott, Barker, Corsica, Freestone & Webb, Gurney Nutting,



1959 Morris Mini-Minor



1947 Cisitalia 202 by Pininfarina

to the economic devastation of the war) brought about wild and bright colors and sports styling being taken directly from fashion houses in swinging London. The new generation of small front-wheel drive cars (something that Citroen had already been doing for two decades) was spearheaded by Alex Issigonis' Mini in 1959. Swinging London also found its way into the designs of other coach builders at the higher end of the market, giving birth to the Jaguar E-Type, Pininfarina's Ferraris, and the Lotus Elan.



1930 Murphy Dusenberg Model J Sport Berline



1932 Chrysler Imperial

**THE AMERICANS**

Prior to the 1960's, American designers and stylists were among the most coveted in coach building; Henry Leland (of Cadillac & Lincoln fame), Walter M. Murphy (who made a household name for himself designing Dusenbergs for the Hollywood elite), Harry Lonschein (first employed at 16 by Brewster & Co. – famous for its extravagant Buick coach work – and later founding Rollston Co., which was rumored to mean 'son of Rolls' despite the added 'T'), and Al Leamy, credited with designing not only the Cord L29, but also the Lebaron Imperial Roadster by Chrysler in 1931.

By the 1960's, the outrageous and wildly creative concept cars of America (which were mimicking military aviation designs, rockets, and 'space ships') were being refined into such future classics as

the Ford Mustang and Chevrolet Corvette, which was brought back from a certain death at the hands of executives dissatisfied with slumping sales of its four-year old 'performance' car in 1957 by a then 19-year old designer named Peter Brock – fresh out of design college - and automotive visionary William Mitchell – who supplied the concept to young Brock.



1963 Split Window Corvette

When mentioning American coach builders, one would be remiss if Harley Earl was not recognized as one of the most visionary. His work with General Motors and all of its subsidiaries (the 1959 blister cockpit turbine-powered Firebird III concept being one of the most notable) were nothing short of awe-inspiring, and most of



1959 Pontiac Firebird III Turbine



1941 Packard Clipper Darrin Convertible

*Continue on page 4*



1941 Packard Custom Super-8 Convertible by Darrin

his hometown Hollywood contemporaries agreed – his clientele included such heavyweights as Cecil B. DeMille.

Possibly the most sought-after luxury coaches made in the United States were made by none other than Packard. Under GM Alvan McCaulay, once buggy-like single-cylinder cars began to grow with size and complexity. When the Packard Custom Body Division began churning out custom limousines, landaulets, cabriolets, and coupes, the names behind them became legends. These names included Brewster, Dietrich, Fleetwood, Lebaron, Rollston, and the man considered to be the unsung prince of American coach building, Howard “Dutch” Darrin.

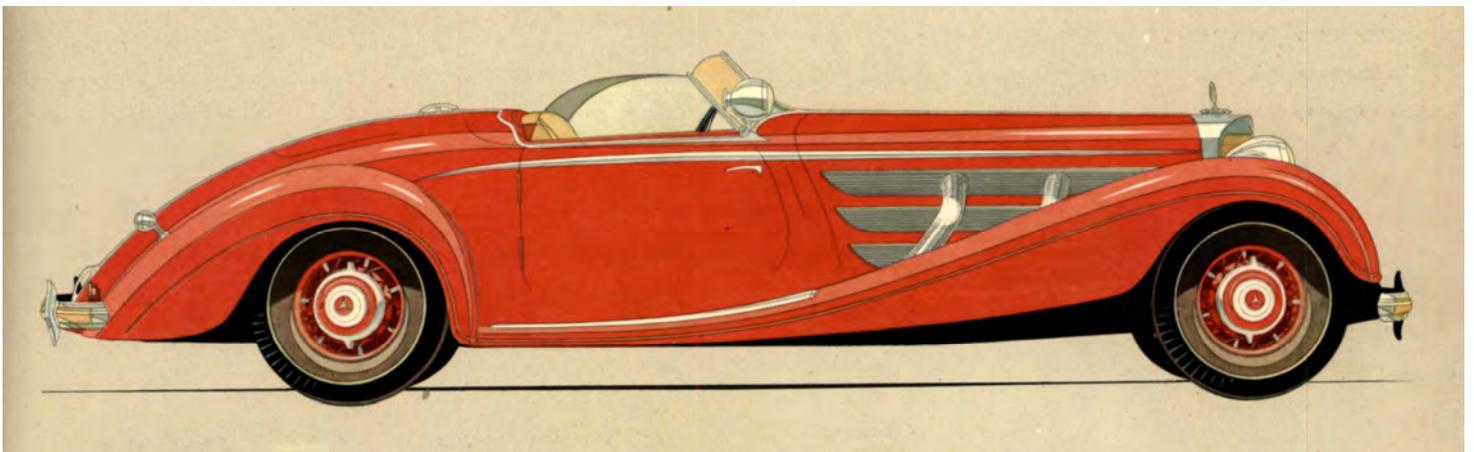
#### THE GERMANS

The German coach builders and auto body stylists were possibly the most famous. The Volkswagen Beetle alone has



1939 Auto-Union Type-D

1930 m=Mercedes-Benz Type 540-K





Bugatti Veyron 16.4

eclipsed the 'units sold' number set by the Ford Model T, and despite the reason for its design (Hitler initially commissioned the Beetle to be the 'Socialist People's car' to be owned by all in the working class), its designer will go down in the annals of history as possibly the greatest coach builder and versatile designer and engineer that ever lived.

Dr. Ferdinand Porsche was in fact of Austrian descent, but is typically recognized as a German designer (mostly due to his reluctant and often defiant membership in the Nazi Party and Hitler's SS, where he designed not only the Tiger and Panzer tanks, but also worked on aero-engines and the V2 rocket program), although technically having been born Bohemian in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. He began as an electrical engineer, and later became the designer of the first hybrid-electric vehicle at 24, the Lohner-Porsche 'Mixtie Voiturette' (which we chronicled in an earlier newsletter). He went on to design for Austro-Daimler, Daimler-Benz (where he developed the S-type), Auto Union (which bore the GP racing car now considered to be one of the most expensive collectible cars in the world), Volkswagen, Cisitalia, and his namesake company Porsche.

Porsche, however, was not the only famous and sought-after of Germany's coach builders and stylists. Erdmann &

Rossi were building coaches as early as 1906, and in addition to designing and building bodies for luxury vehicles such as Bugatti, Mercedes, and Hispano-Suiza (mostly for European royalty), also became the exclusive distributor of Rolls-Royce and Bentley vehicles in Germany. Also notable were the Karosserie Rometsch, Carosserie Schebera, and the Spohn Karosserie, which boasted some of the most creative and weird amalgamations of fiberglass and steel bodies, usually mounted to Maybach and later BMW chassis. – Kevin J Parker

#### Bibliography

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*"Coachwork on Rolls-Royce 1906-1939,"* Lawrence Dalton © 1975 Dalton-Watson / Assorted pages

*"Pinin Farina: Master Coachbuilder,"* Michael Frostick © 1977 Dalton-Watson / Assorted pages

*"World's Great Automobile Stylists, The,"* John Tipler ©1990 Mallard Press / Assorted pages

A very special thanks to Robert Koumans and his contributing editors and guest writers at [www.coachbuild.com](http://www.coachbuild.com), who were an invaluable resource in writing this article – please make a point of visiting this fabulous website!

Note: All bibliographic material listed here is available at the Automotive Research Library of the HCFI.



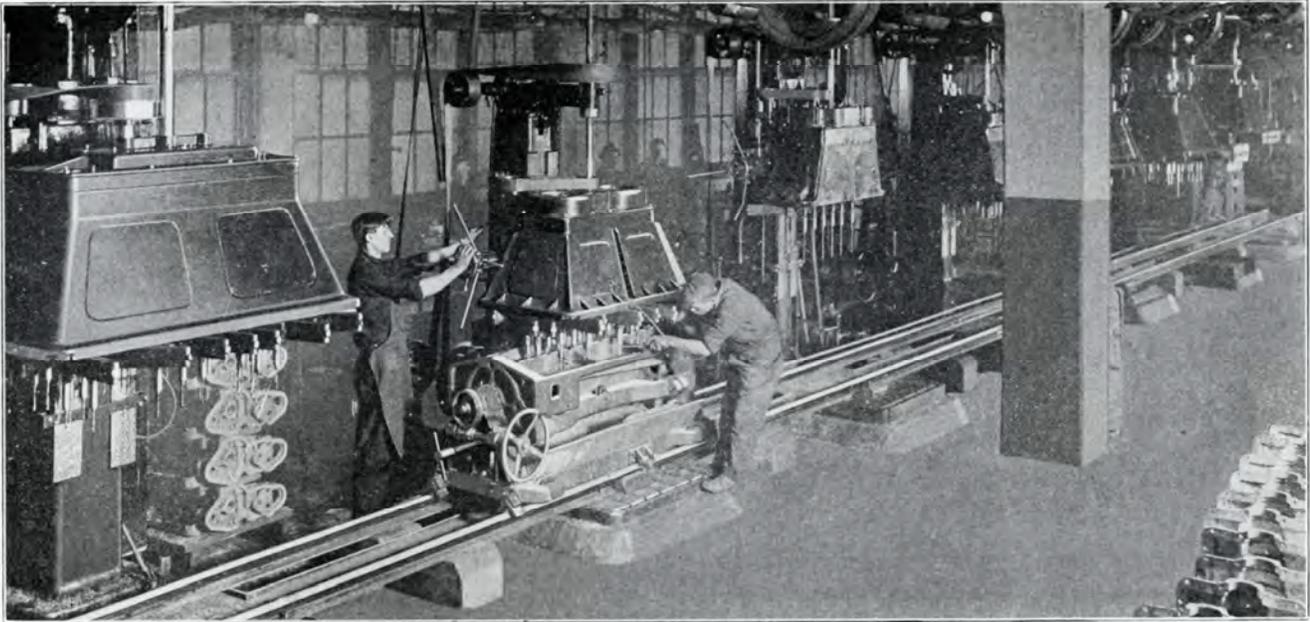
Stokowski's "Tear Drop"

LEOPOLD STOKOWSKI, leader of the Philadelphia Orchestra, is said to have purchased one of these Dynamaxion, three wheeled, "tear drops." It was made in Connecticut and is the invention of Buckminster Fuller. Its predecessor proved not to be very "sea-worthy."

"Any man who thinks he can be happy and prosperous by letting the government take care of him --- better take a closer look at the American Indian."  
Henry Ford

# 100 Years Ago — A Century of Progress

## FACTORY TRANSPORTATION REDUCED TO ITS LOWEST TERMS



Internal transportation in connection with a manufacturing plant consists in moving material from the stock rooms to the successive departments where it is processed, and in those departments, from one machine to another. Superficially it may be classed as haulage only where inter-department movements are concerned. That is one reason why it was so long neglected as a problem of even greater importance within the department than in preserving the production balance between the various shop units. As a problem it was not obvious.

The fact of its greater moment did not appear until the mysteries of scientific management began to unfold. Then it was discovered that a consider-

able proportion of the time and energy of the skilled mechanic often was expended in lifting parts from the floor to his machine, securing them in the fixtures, and finally removing them to another place after a cycle of productive operations. It is the aim of scientific management to segregate profitable from unprofitable labor and to conserve the efforts of the trained and skillful operative. Hence, in many factories, transportation devices that were undreamed of three or four years ago. And hence, in the particular case of the Packard Motor Car Co., Detroit, the establishment of what is lightly referred to as the "Packard Short Line."

Engine crank cases require sundry drilling opera-

tions, all of which require time, but which, by the use of multiple-spindle machines, are readily separated into seven distinct operations. For each operation similar mounting in a box fixture must be provided for the casting, while in each case a drill jig must be applied to guide the drills. The "short-line" method of operation consists in aligning the seven machines and connecting them by ways, on which the casting can be moved from one machine to the next. Thus there is but one "set-up" for the whole series of operations—involving no less than 149 bits—and two men are able to complete all the drilling on the case in exactly 26 minutes.



**L**INDBERGH WENT SO FAST IN ESTABLISHING A NEW TRANSCONTINENTAL SPEED RECORD EASTWARD THAT HE DESTROYED HIS OFFICIAL RECORD.

*(Excessive vibration broke his barograph)*

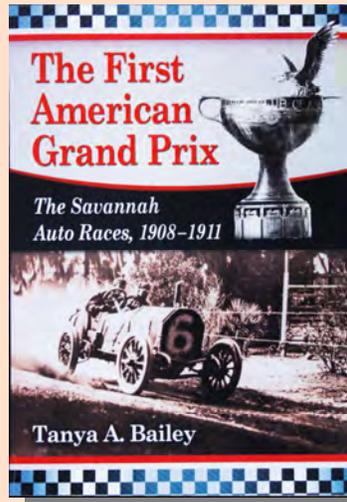
## Swap Your Weather for This?

**G**RUMBLING again, hey? Well, when the bird you see here had his picture taken he was grumbling about the weather, too. And he was thinking how nice it would be to sit on the veranda in his scants with a cold bottle of beer at half past 90 in the shade.



**The First American Grand Prix  
The Savannah Auto Races, 1908 – 1911  
By Tanya A. Bailey**

Published by: McFarland, May 2014  
Page Count: 240pp.  
Binding: softcover



I have just finished reading ‘The First American Grand Prix, The Savannah Auto Races 1908—1911,’ by Tanya A. Bailey. In this fantastic retrospective, Bailey details the history of the people, politics, and events of the Savannah Grand Prix within that historical four-year period.

Bailey’s attention to detail here is evident, as well as what obviously was a great deal of painstaking research in preparation of this book. For instance,

it is noteworthy that Savannah’s history of racing dates back to the 1850’s beginning with horse racing and, eventually evolving into bicycle racing, with Savannah building the first cement bicycle race track in America to host national bicycle races.

The conflicts of the Automobile Club of America (ACA) and American Automobile Association (AAA) regarding the hosting of local races versus international races, as well as the politics involved, are also thoroughly documented here, making for an enthralling read.

The book also details the problems of the Vanderbilt races in New York; races run on public roadways without adequate security for the public or drivers, and how in direct contrast, Savannah’s road course was *specifically* developed for the safety of drivers and the public alike. In pursuit of this goal, the road racing course utilized the latest developments in road construction, using Macadam with the highest-quality of materials available.

I personally found the short biographies of the drivers and mechanics particularly entertaining and quite informative. In short, I highly recommend this book to anyone interested in automotive and/or racing history; it’s definitely a must-read. Congratulations to Tanya for providing such a fantastic book. - “Mac”

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Chrysler light six, introduced by Maxwell—Chalmers Corp., featured high-Compression engine, seven-bearing crankshaft, four-wheel hydraulic brakes, replaceable cartridge oil filter.

Fageol Motor Company started bus production in Kent, Ohio

W. S. Knudsen became president and general manager of Chevrolet.

The Winton Company discontinued manufacture of cars, to produce Diesel engines.

Major Award Trophy was presented to White by U.S.S.R. for reliability and endurance.

The Publication "MoToR", edited for 21 years for car owners, became a trade magazine.

Ethyl gasoline was put on the market.

A Duesenberg Special, equipped with supercharger, and driven by Joe Boyer and L. L. Corum, set a new record (98.24 m.p.h.) in winning the Indianapolis Speedway Sweepstakes.

Balloon tires appeared as standard equipment.

General Motor Proving Grounds was completed.

The U.S. now had one automobile for every seven persons.

A Reo motor bus made a transcontinental trip.

Hupmobile introduced a straight eight car.

Ford Motor Company produced its ten-millionth car.

Two-filament bulbs, permitting use of direct and diverted light, appeared in headlights of some cars.

Nash Motors bought Lafayette Motor Corp.

New makes this Year: Cartermobile, Caward-Dart, Chrysler, Delling Steam Car, Eagle, Hathaway, Meech-Stoddard, Paramount, Rehberger, Traveler

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