

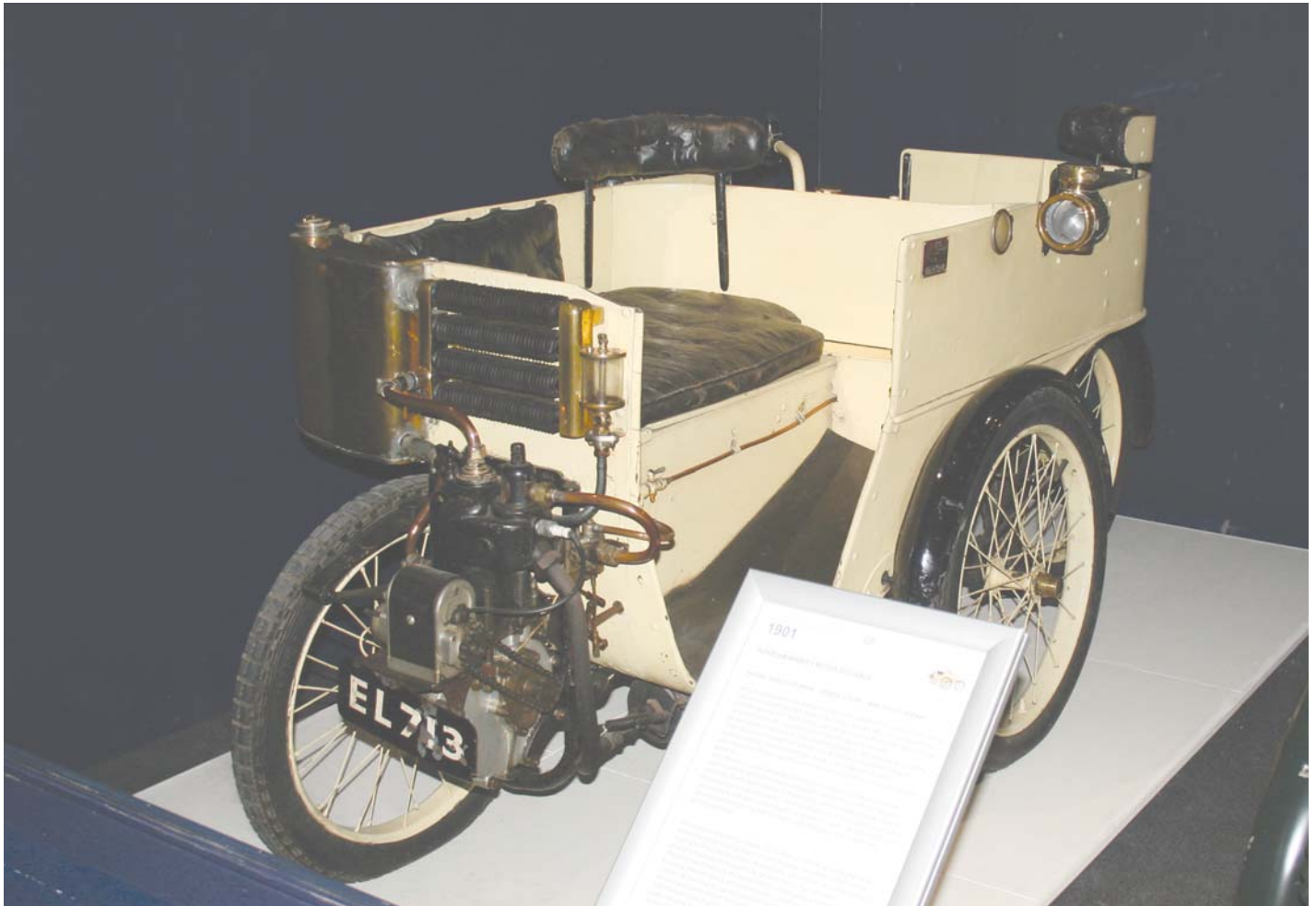
# SAH Journal



The Society of Automotive Historians, Inc.

Issue 255 Electronic

March - April 2012



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*Inside the Fisher Body Craftsmen's Guild*  
*The Fisher Body Craftsman's Guild recap*

## Date Reminders

**June 11, 2012**  
Scharburg Award Nominations Due

**July 31, 2012**  
Valentine Award Nominations Due.

**August 1, 2012**  
Bradley Award Nominations Due.

**October 11, 2012**  
Fall Board Meeting.

**October 12, 2012**  
Annual Meeting and Awards Banquet.

[www.autohistory.org](http://www.autohistory.org)

Cover Vehicle: 1901 Sunbeam-Mabley at the Louwman Museum. Photo: *Lincoln Sarmanian*

# SAH Journal



The Society of Automotive Historians, Inc.

Issue 255 March - April 2012

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**Copy Deadline for Journal 256  
June 20, 2012**

## SAH Annual Awards

### **Benz Award**, Chair: Don Keefe, [donaldjkeefe@aol.com](mailto:donaldjkeefe@aol.com)

The Carl Benz Award is presented each year for the best article published in the previous calendar year. SAH Awards of Distinction are awarded for exemplary articles not receiving the Benz Award.

2011 Terry V. Boyce, "1951 Buick XP-300: Mr. Chayne Builds His Dream Car," in *Collectible Automobile*  
2010 John L. Baeke, M.D., "The Lebarons: Heir Apparent to the Throne," in *The Reunion*  
2009 Jim Chase, "Packard and Winton: The Transcontinental Rivalry," in *The Packard Cormorant*

### **Bradley Award**, Chair: Judith Endelman, [endelman@thehenryford.org](mailto:endelman@thehenryford.org)

The James J. Bradley Distinguished Service Award is presented to deserving archives and libraries for exemplary efforts in preserving motor vehicle resource materials.

2011 Jaguar Daimler Heritage Trust, Coventry, UK  
2010 Automotive Research Library of the Horseless Carriage Foundation, La Mesa, California, USA  
2009 Gilmore Car Museum, Hickory Corners, Michigan, USA

### **Brigham Award**, Chair: Jack Juratovic, 712 Novak Lane, Big Rapids MI 49307

The Brigham Award is presented for magazines published in the previous calendar year.

2011 *The Packard Cormorant*, published by Packard Automobile Classics, Stuart Blond, Editor.  
2010 *Antique Automobile*, published by Antique Automobile Club of America. Editor-in-chief/design director West Peterson  
2009 *Collectible Automobile*, published by Publications International, Ltd. John Biel, editor-in-chief

### **Cugnot Award, English**, Chair: Doug Leighton, [jleight@huron.uwo.ca](mailto:jleight@huron.uwo.ca)

The Nicholas-Joseph Cugnot Award is presented each year for the best book published in the previous calendar year. SAH Awards of Distinction are awarded for exemplary books not receiving the Cugnot Award.

2011 Joel E. Finn, *Caribbean Capers: The Cuban Grand Prix Road Races of 1957, 1958, and 1960*  
2010 Charles K. Hyde, *Storied Independent Automakers: Nash, Hudson and American Motors*  
2009 Karl Ludvigsen, *Ferdinand Porsche, Genesis of Genius: Road, Racing and Aviation Innovation, 1900-1933*

### **Cugnot Award, Non-English**, Chair: Bill Kreiner, [bill.kreiner@gmail.com](mailto:bill.kreiner@gmail.com)

The Nicholas-Joseph Cugnot Award, Non-English, is presented each year for the best book published in a language other than English the previous calendar year. SAH Awards of Distinction are awarded for exemplary books not receiving the Cugnot Award.

2011 Claude Rouxel and Laurent Friry, *Gotha de l'Automobile Française*  
2010 Sébastien Faurès Fustel de Coulanges, *Fiat en Grand Prix, 1920-1930*  
Hans-Jürgen Schneider and Halwart Schrader, *Legende: BMW 02*  
2009 Manuel Lage, *1,000,000: Un Millón de Camiones y Buses Españoles*

### **Friend of Automotive History**, Chair: Darwyn Lumley, [DLumley942@aol.com](mailto:DLumley942@aol.com)

Recognition to an individual who has made a particular personal contribution to automotive history.

2011 Kit Foster  
2010 Miles C. Collier  
2009 C. Marshall Naul

### **Ingersoll Award**, Chair: Thomas Jakups, [tjakups@mac.com](mailto:tjakups@mac.com)

The E. P. Ingersoll Award is given for the best presentation of automotive history in other than print media.

2011 Racemaker Press, O'Keefe Winners Database, published online.  
2010 Mark Theobald, [Coachbuilt.com](http://Coachbuilt.com)  
2009 Michael Hamm, producer, director/writer; Kerrie Long, producer "The Greatest Auto Race on Earth"

### **Scharchburg Award**, Chair: John Heitmann, [John.Heitmann@notes.udayton.edu](mailto:John.Heitmann@notes.udayton.edu)

Presented to an undergraduate or graduate level student for the best research paper in the field of automotive history.

2011 Andrew Jennings Mabon, "The Automobile, the Interstate, and Suburbanites"  
2009 Ted R. Mitchell, "Sit-Down Women: Gender and the 1936-7 General Motors Strike in Flint, Michigan"  
2008 Peter S. Cajka, "Consumers, Cadillacs, and Civil Rights: The Social and Cultural Impact of the Automobile in *Ebony*, 1945-1965"

**A complete history of award winners may be found at: [www.autohistory.org/awards.html](http://www.autohistory.org/awards.html)**

## President's Message

By the time this issue of the *Journal* is printed and sent out to SAH members, our April meeting in Philadelphia will have taken place. As I am writing this column, it is still two weeks away. The efforts of *Arthur Jones* and his committee will require strong support from the rest of us to ensure success as we embark on our first "stand alone" conference. Our semi-annual gatherings in the spring and in the autumn at Hershey are times to celebrate our accomplishments and to plan for the SAH's future.

Let me share some thoughts with you and invite your response. Demographically, we are an aging bunch! This is true of the "old car hobby" in general, but it poses a challenge for us: how can we attract new and younger members into the SAH so that following generations will be able to nurture and develop it? Our approaches to students via special membership rates and essay contests are important. How can we build upon these initiatives to ensure the future of our Society?

Our membership numbers have varied from the 750-800 range to the 900+ range. Thanks to the efforts of our treasurer *Pat Bisson* and others, joining the SAH and maintaining a membership are now less cumbersome tasks than in the past, through the use of our website and its electronic advantages, and the working out of some initial "glitches." What strategies might we employ to expand our membership base to ensure a vibrant future for the SAH? Would members like to see a wider range of activities and services beyond our meetings and publications?

The Society depends on the hard work and good will of those who have served selflessly, effectively, and voluntarily on its Board, Executive and Publications Committees. Can we continue to operate on a strictly amateur basis in an increasingly demanding, professional world? Are we at the point where a "civil servant," or "executive director" paid on a part-time basis might lighten the Board's workload and sharpen our organizational focus?

Our membership is truly international and reflects a variety of interests within the SAH. How can we communicate more effectively with each other? Recent revisions to our website should help. A promising initiative is the creation of a racing and motorsports section, currently being shepherded by *Pat Yongue*. Should we encourage the development of such special interest groups? How do we do that while maintaining the unity and sense of purpose so essential to the SAH?

The future of the SAH lies with all of us. We need to share our automobile enthusiasms with others at a personal level to attract new members. We have to be willing to shoulder some of the Society's administrative tasks so that it can function efficiently and smoothly and continue to grow.

There are great days ahead for the SAH. Please share your thoughts and insights about the journey we have embarked on together.

—*Douglas Leighton*

### SAH members are invited to join the **Classic Car Club of America** (CCCA)

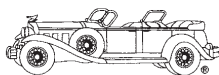
founded in 1952 to promote the preservation and restoration of distinctive motorcars built between 1925 and 1948.

The club publishes its *Bulletin* eight times a year and the quarterly *Classic Car* magazine.

The club maintains a museum and research library on the grounds of the Gilmore Car Museum in Hickory Corners, Michigan.

For membership details contact the club

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## SAH Chapter News

The Southern California chapter of the Society of Automotive Historians is going to revive the James Valentine Award. Long-time members will recall that the award honors chapter founder James Valentine by recognizing the published work of an author who has published a book or article which dealt with the history of the automobile in California. Past winners have included Kevin Nelson for *Wheels of Change* in 2010, Ken Albert for *For the Love of Old Cars* in 2009, and Joe Scalzo for *City of Speed* in 2008.

At this time we are looking for nominations for the 2012 Valentine Award. The two basic criteria to remember are that the work must have been published in the previous calendar year, in this case 2011, and that the work should deal, in large part, with the automobile in California. It could be about persons or events, or the work of a company. We have one nominee at this time: *Mustang GT/CS* by Paul Newitt with a 2011 copyright.

It is planned to honor the recipient of the Valentine Award for 2012 at a luncheon and general membership meeting of the chapter in the last quarter of the year. Therefore, if you have any works to nominate for the award you should inform me by email, letter or phone call before August 1 of this year, so that our judges can review the nominated books and pick a winner by October.

Bob Ewing,  
Chairman, Valentine Award  
SAH SoCal  
5841 Greenleaf Ave.  
Whittier, CA 90601  
(562) 693-3580  
[bobewing35@hotmail.com](mailto:bobewing35@hotmail.com)

I look forward to learning what you would like to nominate, and to the revival of the James Valentine Award by our chapter. —*Bob Ewing*



# SAH News



SAH Member *Bill Porter* has been featured in *The New York Times* "Wheels" blog for April 17, 2012.

The article covered the SAH Philadelphia conference. Porter's lecture was "The New Biomorphs: An Emergent Trend on the Automotive Design Scene," while *Robert Ebert* and *Mira Wilkins* were named in the piece as well.

## HORSELESS CARRIAGE GAZETTE

As you might expect from a club publication, the *Horseless Carriage Gazette* is chock full of exciting four-color photographs showing brass-era automobiles in action. First-generation cars don't get out often but, when they do, it is a real privilege to be along for the ride.

History buffs will enjoy a feature or two in each *Horseless Carriage Gazette* about marques both popular and obscure. In addition, more than 240 black & white images from the pre-1916 era were used as illustrations in the six 2007 issues.

Membership is \$45 (\$55 outside of the USA).

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# Letters

*From John Harrison*

Loughton, Essex, England

I enjoyed your article on the "Z-Line" in *SAH Journal* 254, but I think one point would benefit from clarification. The caption to the photo of the three-wheeled Reliant Regal infers that it was manufactured in "Z-Line" form for 20 years from 1953. This is not the case. The car went through eight guises between 1953 and 1973 and only the last two, the Marks VII and VIII, produced from 1962 to 1973 used the "Z-Line" style.

As your article says, the Reliant was built to a restricted weight to meet legal requirements. This was 7 hundredweight, (784 pounds) necessary for the car to be drivable by people who only held a motorbike license and to achieve a lower road tax. One consequence of this provision was that the spare wheel was not sold with the car but available as an optional extra!



Reliant Regal "Mark I," above, with composite hardwood and metal panel bodywork. Three wheel hydraulic brakes.

Circa 1961 Reliant Regal, below.



Reliant Regal, Z-line example, below, pictured on the street circa 1986.



*From Walter M. P. McCall*

Editor, *The Professional Car*  
Windsor, Ontario, Canada

A "Floral" Tribute to the "Z" Roof  
Having grown up as a car-crazed teenager in the 1950s, I thoroughly enjoyed *A. Meyer's* nifty piece on the "Zee" roofline in *SAH Journal* #254. Vivid images of the 1956 Mercury Turnpike Cruiser and barge-like 1958 Lincolns remain forever in my mind, long after their awesome announcement ads.

However, there was another lesser-known interpretation of the reverse-slanting roof in the 1950s and early 1960s. The limited-production Cadillac flower cars built by America's major funeral car and ambulance builders also utilized this striking styling motif.



The GM of the industry – Superior Coach Corp. of Lima, Ohio, introduced this dashing roof design on its dramatically restyled professional cars for 1957. So did Superior's principal rivals Miller-Meteor, Eureka and S&S. With its smartly reversed roofline, big wheel cutouts and low, flat hood, Superior's 1957 Cadillac Coupe de Fleur was about as sporty-looking a funeral vehicle the trade has ever seen. Superior utilized this notched cab design through the 1964 model year. Miller-Meteor offered it through 1962, and Eureka through its very last year, 1964. Hess & Eisenhardt (S&S) also utilized this cantilever roof profile in 1959.



Despite its somber mission, the funeral service profession has always been a style-conscious industry, unhesitatingly adopting all of the latest styling trends from Detroit. The 1957-64 flower cars underscore this in a real way.

## SAH in Paris

The Society's 17th annual European dinner meeting and awards ceremony was held on Thursday evening, February 2, 2012, at the Automobile Club de France in Paris. The world's oldest motoring organization, the ACF holds a unique place in the *patrimoine* – the heritage – of automotive history, and we are privileged to meet there. This year's event welcomed members and guests from France, Spain, Germany, Finland, Sweden, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and the United States.

*Kit Foster* welcomed the group on behalf of SAH, a greeting repeated in French by our host organizer, *Laurent Friry*. *Arthur Jones* spoke about the upcoming Automotive History Conference to be held in Philadelphia, USA, in April. Awards for publishing and service were then presented.

The James J. Bradley Distinguished Service Award, for the preservation of motor vehicle archives and resource materials, was presented to the Jaguar Daimler Heritage Trust of Coventry, UK. Chief archivist *Anders Ditlev Clausager* accepted the award on behalf of the Trust. An Award of Distinction for a book in the English language, *Voiture Minimum: Le Corbusier and the Automobile*, had been announced at the October meeting at Hershey and presented to the publisher, The MIT Press. The author,



Laurent Friry, Claudine Latouille and Claude Rouxel accept the Cugnot Award from Kit Foster, above.



Antonio Amado, above, accepts his award.

Spanish architect *Antonio Amado*, was present in Paris to accept his award.

Two Awards of Distinction were presented for books in languages other than English. Author Christian Suhr accepted an award for *Lindner, Karosserien und Anhänger aus Ammendorf*, a German language book published by Verlag Kraftakt. The second award was for a Czech language book, *Tatra, Nákladní a Užítková Voždla, Autobusy a Trolejbusy*, by *Marián Šuman-Hreblay*, published by Computer Press. Neither author nor publisher was able to attend.

The Nicolas-Joseph Cugnot Award for the best book in a language other than English was presented for *Gotha de L'Automobile Française*, a French-language tribute to French luxury cars of the 1920s to 1950s. Authors *Claude Rouxel* and *Laurent Friry*, and publisher *Claudine Latouille* of E.T.A.I. were present to accept their awards.




Christian Suhr, above, with Kit Foster. Anders Clausager, below. All photos from Kit Foster.



*Malcolm Jeal*, past Chairman of the Society of Automotive Historians in Britain and editor of SAHB's annual *Aspects of Motoring History*, closed the meeting with an encomium to the 2011 Friend of Automotive History. While in Paris, many members took the opportunity to visit *Rétromobile*, the annual indoor old car event at Paris Expo. In addition, there were two auctions of historic cars, one at *Rétromobile* conducted by French auctioneers *Artcurial*, and another by *Bonhams* at a nearby location.

—Kit Foster


*Mr. Foster is the 2011 Friend of Automotive History. -Ed.*



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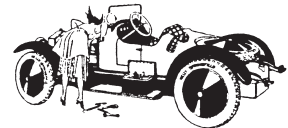


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## SAH in Paris

### Rétromobile Turns 37

Rétromobile, the French old car event, returned for its 37th year in February. Running for five days, it coincided with the SAH European meeting, as has been the custom from the first meeting in 1996. This year Rétromobile moved to different exhibition halls at the Paris Expo grounds.

Rétromobile differs from United States shows in that it encompasses classic car dealers, manufacturer displays, enthusiast clubs and parts vendors. Many of the clubs are hosted by the manufacturers of surviving marques. Porsche made a Rétromobile debut this year, with a presence from its French distributor. Other automakers exhibiting were the French "Big Three," Peugeot, Citroën and Renault, and European marques Mercedes-Benz, Škoda and BMW.

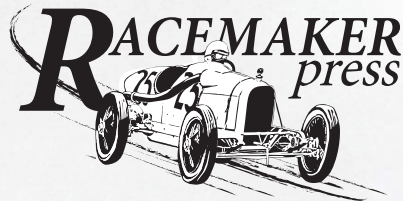
As has been its custom, the show followed a number of parallel themes. There was an observance of 50 years



Gerin prototype, above and top right. Mullin Museum stand, below. Duvant engine, right. Photos by Kit Foster



Renault Alpine, below left. Renault 5, below. Photos from Lincoln Sarmanian.



# Frank Lockhart

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Detail of the Gérin powerplant, above.



Duvant engine open valve train, above. Bugatti from the Musée National de l'Automobile above right. 1937 Georges Irat MDU with a Ruby engine in as-found condition, right. All photos this page from Lincoln Sarmanian.

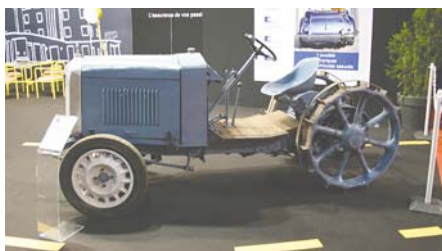
Honda N 600, below, part of the Honda Civic display. Rétromobile features many stands of automobilia, such as vintage gas pumps, below right.



Soylto New-Map, above, part of a collector car insurance display. Display of amphibious vehicles, below.



Detail of the Gérin driver's compartment, above.



Martinet Tractor, with Citroën B2 powerplant, above.

"Constructeurs Sans Patente" example, a circa-1966 BLF, below, built by Lionel Bernard who started the project at age 18. He drove the car in several races.



of the Ferrari GTO and MGB, as well as 40 years of the Honda Civic and Renault 5, the latter known in some markets as "Le Car." Topical displays included one of amphibious vehicles and another called Constructeurs sans Patente (manufacturers without license), showcasing a number of one-off cars built in France during the 1960s and early 1970s. Two things were notable about these cars: they followed a design similarity, all being GT coupes, and each one displayed very high quality workmanship. Outside Hall 3 was the working centerpiece of the show. Standing some 18 feet tall and 20 feet in length was a 330-liter, nine-cylinder Duvant diesel engine, comparatively recently taken out of service as an emergency power source at the Auteuil race course in Paris. While undoubtedly dramatic, it could not hold a candle to last year's crowd-pleaser, Alain Cerf's faithful replica of the Cugnot fardier, which huffed and puffed its way along the promenade, demonstrating that Cugnot, in fact, got it right.

But the real star of Rétromobile was in many ways the most unassuming. In a far corner of Hall 2 was an unfinished prototype from the 1920s, a revolutionary and stillborn project of Jacques Gérin, who was apprenticed to Gabriel Voisin. A stark aluminum skeleton, never skinned, it has a two-liter twin-cam rotary-valve engine driving the rear wheels through a friction transmission. The whole powerplant package is designed to be easily removed. The car's suspension is Dubonnet-like, but fitted with high-mounted horizontal springs to reduce unsprung mass. On the stand shared by Joris Bergsma's PreWarCar.com and the British magazine, *The Automobile*, it had been discovered in Ireland by Voisin guru Reg Winstone.

The shorter format for Rétromobile, instituted last year, seems to be a success. Look for the 38th Rétromobile to run for five days early in February 2013.

—Kit Foster



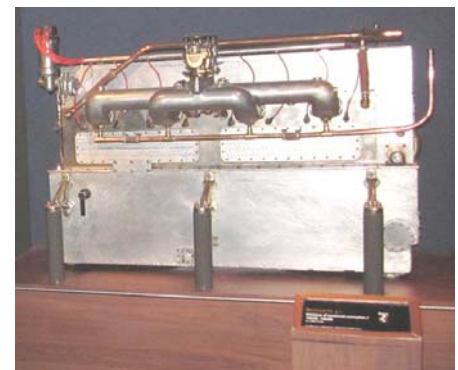
## Pilgrimage to Alsace

It has been some years since there has been an organized SAH excursion in conjunction with the Paris meeting, but members occasionally make forays of their own. This year, *Arthur Jones* suggested that we make a side trip to Mulhouse (Mu-LOOSE if you're French, Mul-HOWzen if you're German), a city in the Alsace region on the French-German border. Car people know Mulhouse as the home of the legendary Schlumpf Collection of Bugattis, now institutionalized as Musée National de l'Automobile – the French national automobile museum.

I had been to Mulhouse once before, in 2003, but Arthur had not. At that time it was a five-hour rail journey from Paris. Thanks to the TGV high-speed train, it now takes but three and a half. Opting for a convenient 10:30 AM departure, we crossed the country quickly, reaching 350 kph (217 mph) at some points and arriving in Mulhouse in time for lunch.

Far more than a Bugatti museum, the Musée encompasses the entire central European auto industry, although its concentration is undoubtedly French. The displays follow the theme begun when the Schlumpf brothers were attempting to acquire and display every Bugatti on earth: cars on gravel, set among cast iron street lanterns in a vast former textile mill. On entering the main hall, one is greeted by a double line of nineteenth and early twentieth century automobiles, almost as far as the eye can see. The representation is fairly comprehensive, not surprisingly heavily French, and extends from the nineteenth century birth of the industry into the 1950s.

If there was a disappointment at the Musée, it was that interpretive material on the cars was very sparse. The general public would have little appreciation for the significance of the various models, although there a few side displays on items of particular interest, such as current-day French auto manufacture and a large exhibit celebrating the Renault 4. The



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most interesting of the interpretations, though, we discovered on our way to the restaurant. In a dimly-lit hall is a parade of Bugatti engines. Upon approaching each one, it becomes suddenly spotlighted, an animated display explains its operation and the sound of the engine plays in the background. Seeing them all together and hearing them run, one can appreciate the vast variety of sizes and songs produced by Bugatti over the marque's first lifetime.

If there was a downside to this year's SAH European activities, it was the extreme cold that gripped the Continent for the entire period. The temperature in Paris barely touched

the freezing point, and Alsace was a full ten degrees Fahrenheit colder. Fortunately, Mulhouse has a modern intra-city tram system that is not only silent and convenient but warm. We also visited Musée du Chemin de Fer, the pre-eminent French rail museum. It was well worth the effort, but cut short because most of the exhibits are in unheated sheds. After an hour and a half Arthur and I were both chilled to the bone. Happily, our hotel, while modest, was toasty warm and Mulhouse has some excellent restaurants. On our return to Paris we found we had missed a snowfall. No worthwhile excursion is complete without its adventures.

—Kit Foster



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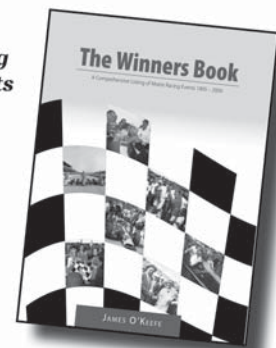
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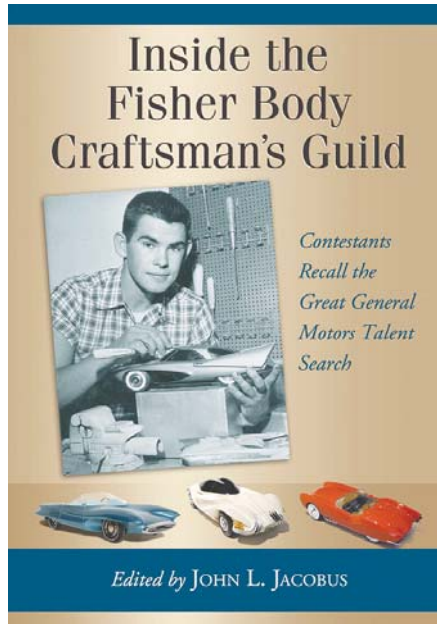
## Book & Media Reviews

Once upon a time it was the design, the styling of a car's body that provided the main focus of the advertisements for it and, in fact, drove the sale. These days styling is still important but other aspects of the automobile have taken the front seat as sales motivators. Cost is one, but now, too, a vehicle's fuel or power requirements and consumption, the various electronic features it has, or safety features, including number and location of airbags, are usually more influential to a sale.

Another notable difference of the times concerns women. Decades ago, females were not permitted in the pits or garage areas at auto races, much less behind the wheel in the cockpit. Nor were women ordinarily hired as car stylists or modelers. In spite of that many advertising messages were directed to milady and the ease with which she could operate a particular auto or how stylish she'd look, and be, in it.

The Art Center School (Art Center College of Design since its mid-1970s name change) was established in 1930 in Southern California motivated by "the idea of bringing art to industry". Detroit's Center for Creative Studies didn't open until 1959 under the name Arts School of the Detroit Society of Arts & Crafts. So "back then" how did the manufacturers of automobiles locate young men with talent and ability in order to staff those increasingly influential design studios?

One idea achieved success beyond anything its creators, the seven Fisher brothers, ever imagined. And not just for their own company, which had become a division of General Motors in 1926, but for all manner of makers of products in addition to cars, plus various aspects of the architectural profession, plus educators, craftsmen, and artists well into the next century.

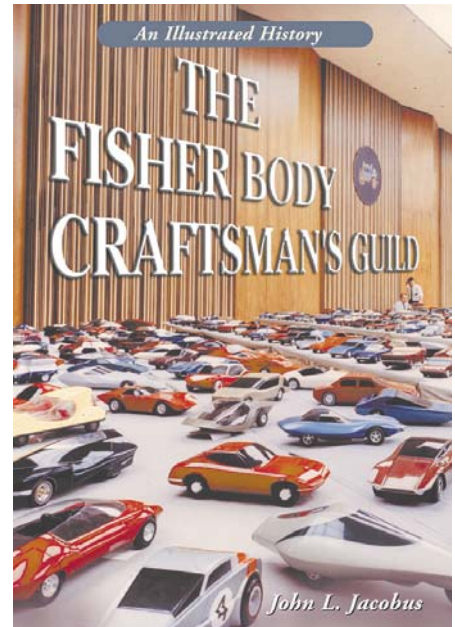


### ***Inside the Fisher Body Craftsman's Guild : Contestants Recall the Great General Motors Talent Search***

Edited by John L Jacobus  
336 pages softbound 7" x 10"  
39 color and 176 b/w photos  
Includes appendix, glossary, bibliography, contributor bios and index  
Published 2012  
ISBN: 978-0-7864-4861-6  
\$35  
Published by McFarland & Company  
www.mcfarlandpub.com  
800-253-2187

It was August 1930 when the nationwide competition called the Fisher Body Craftsman's Guild was announced. Young men and boys ages 12 to 19 were eligible to enter and vie for \$50,000 in prizes. That first year, no one could have envisioned it would continue for 38 years albeit with a five year hiatus due to World War II. Over the nearly four decades nearly ten million (yes, million) would not only sign up to become Guildsmen, but proudly continue to refer to themselves as such for the rest of their lives.

What was the magic of becoming and being a Guildsman? Two books published by McFarland, written by *John L. Jacobus* provide the answers in detail. Jacobus is exactly the right person to have written these. First,



### ***The Fisher Body Craftsman's Guild***

By John L Jacobus  
359 pages hardbound 7" x 10"  
41 color and 130 b/w photos  
Includes appendices, chapter notes, glossary, bibliography and index  
Published 2005  
ISBN: 978-0-7864-1719-3  
\$49.95  
Published by McFarland & Company  
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because he is proud to himself be a Guildsman. His own story expresses the role the competition played in shaping his life. He participated six times, from 1961-66. Second, because he is also a careful researcher and competent writer who, after retiring from his career as an auto safety engineer, reached out to other Guildsmen in order to create these books. The magnitude of the search and research is clearly shown with just a glance at the nine pages of mouse type required to print the bibliography.

The initial book, *The Fisher Body Craftsman's Guild*, is best described as a truly scholarly work. Rest assured aside from bibliography, index and chapter notes the rest of the book is not printed in mouse type. Happily "scholarly" does not mean boring or



dry reading as on the pages the Guild is described along with how it operated, the people at GM who ran it, and stories of some of the many entrants. The extensive appendices, thirteen of them, contain facts, figures, and statistics. They make interesting reading.

Entering the Guild was easy and free; simply send in an enrollment card, but becoming a Guildsman required a real investment, especially of time and effort, on the part of the entrant. During the first years of the competition 1930-36, entrants all created models of the ornate and intricate Napoleonic coach that was the Body by Fisher logo. Then in 1937 models submitted could be either of the coach or a model of an auto (sedan was specified) that was the entrant's own conceptualization and design.

When the competition resumed after the war all entrants created their own automotive design and then modeled it. And in all cases the entrant also had to devise and custom build, within certain specified parameters, the shipping crate in which his entry would travel via Railway Express, the US Postal Service, or even if it was delivered by hand to GM in Michigan.



The difficult-to-build Napoleonic coaches, **above**, were for entrants of the Craftsman's Class. Eighteen-year-old Maurice A. Beliveau of Manchester, New Hampshire, built this model for the 1947 competition. It earned him a \$150 Regional award. **Below**, model created by Warren Bakken, age 15, of Grand Forks, North Dakota. 1953 was his fifth year entering a model and earned him \$4,000 First National Junior Scholarship award. Model is plaster, window trim is stainless steel half-round dental wire. Bakken soldered dozens of small brads on the back to act as fasteners. Wheels and tires were of solid aluminum which Warren machined by turning on a home-made lathe.



The first book was published in 2005, but it begged for the sequel that Jacobus has provided with this newest title *Inside the Fisher Body Craftsman's Guild*, published in 2012. It takes the reader up close and personal via 29 first-person essays from Guildsmen. In each the contributor relates from the perspective of today his Guild experiences. Reading each chapter truly reinforces the dedication and attention to detail that was required of an entrant. On average it took 500 or more hours to make a model, plus there were often skills and abilities these young men had to master first.

Consider which of these steps you would have been able to accomplish as a teen or even today.

- draw your own unique design to scale and specifications,
- create that design by carving it out of wood or make a mold and cast in resin,
- devise a method and attach axles and wheels, create trim pieces (bumpers, wheel covers, headlights, etc) and means of attaching to the model,
- apply finish (paint, sand, paint sand, usually 20 or more coats) to obtain the lustrous, professional finished appearance needed.



This model, **above**, created by Paul Bonfilio of Bayside, NY who would eventually become an architect. But in 1961 he entered the Guild for the 4th time with this model created with plaster-of-Paris body, chrome-plated brass for trim and Lucite windshield. The highest award it earned its creator was a \$100 Second in NY State Senior Division. In retrospect Bonfilio speculates his design may have cost him judging points because headlights, though casting a wide swath of light with their elliptical shape, were not sealed beams. As if to test this thesis, the following year Bonfilio's model was more conventional in all aspects and it did, indeed, achieve both state and regional awards and was told by the judges that his model was, "practical enough to be mass produced."

All images are courtesy Ron Will and John Jacobus.



- custom-construct a wood shipping crate with "tie-downs" to ensure the model remains safe and undamaged during shipping.

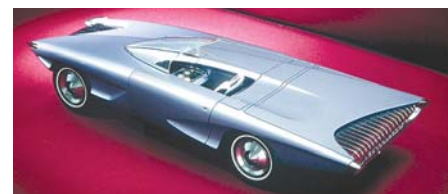
To be successful, a Guildsman had to master all of these, plus more.

Some stories are told by award winners, some by men who though they entered multiple times never earned any award. Yet all speak as with one voice reinforcing that Guild participation had a significant influence on the outcome of their lives.

Together the books tell the most complete story, but even separately each is a worthy addition to any library and an engaging read.

It was while reading the "hindsight" words from the various Guildsmen that I began to wonder what young people of today will look back on 40 or 50 years hence as having not merely had an influence on them, but been so positively beneficial—shaping character, instilling personal and professional ethics, etc—to the entirety of their adult lives that follow.

—Helen V. Hutchings



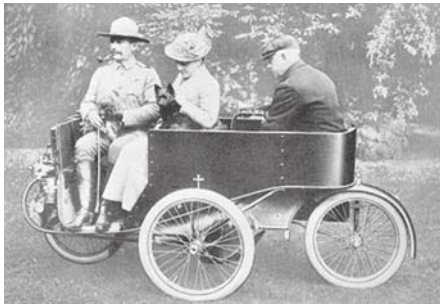
Model, **above**, created in 1961, his third year entering, by eighteen-year-old Ron Will of Michigan City, Indiana, was carved from poplar. He coated it with fiberglass resin wood sealer to enhance Twilight Mist lacquer paint which was a 1961 Olds 98 production color. Windshield is plexiglass which Will hand-formed over his handmade mold in the kitchen oven. It took some half-dozen tries. The asymmetrical design had been inspired by Virgil Exner Sr's XNR show car. Model earned its designer/maker a \$5,000 First National Senior Scholarship.

This model, **left**, was entered in the Open Category of the 1967 competition by Robert Lawhn of Houston, Texas. The front track of this car, created in white pine covered with fiberglass resin, is narrower than that of rear. Window moldings are stainless steel wire, bumpers and grille are chrome-plated brass and wheel covers are Ford dashboard knobs that have been cut down and chromed. In case you're wondering, occupant access was conceived via a canopy that included the top and window glass surfaces and driver vision to rear was projected to be by some futuristic radar-enhanced system. This was Lawhn's final and 6th time to enter and his model earned him a \$1,000 National Styling Scholarship.

# Editorial

## Diamonds Aren't Forever

We have been conditioned by centuries of transportation history to recognize a wheeled road-going vehicle as having essentially a rectilinear shape with a wheel at each of the four corners. The three-wheeled variation, with the third wheel on the center line of the vehicle is still considered somewhat unusual, as it requires a "third" track. Many people have proposed a rhomboid, or diamond wheel



Sunbeam-Mabley, above and right, designed by Maxwell Maberley-Smith. The vehicle resembled a motorized Victorian tête-à-tête chair with wheels. Powered by a De Dion 2.75 hp single-cylinder water-cooled engine driving the center wheels via belt and chain drive. Tiller steering acting on the front and rear single wheels, with the driver seated at the rear. Maberley-Smith apparently offered Sunbeam the complete vehicle design which was marketed as the "Sunbeam-Mabley" from 1901-1903. As a completely open vehicle with a top speed of 20 mph, and no seatbelts, the vehicle was clearly meant for leisurely fair weather transport.

pattern with a single, centered wheel at the front and the rear with two parallel wheels placed to the sides somewhere near the center of the wheelbase, effectively forming a third axle. Beyond this vague definition, there seem to be a few variations of steered and powered wheels:

- Counter-steered front and rear wheels, powered center axle.
- Counter-steered front and rear wheels which are driven.
- Steered front wheel, powered rear wheel, center axle idles.

A subcategory of the type has the two side wheels intermittently in contact with the ground or even fully retractable, leaving the vehicle a monorack type at speed. In the case of the Shilovski Gyrocar prototype, below, the intent seemed to be that the vehicle would only ever require two wheels,



## The "SUNBEAM" Mabley Car.

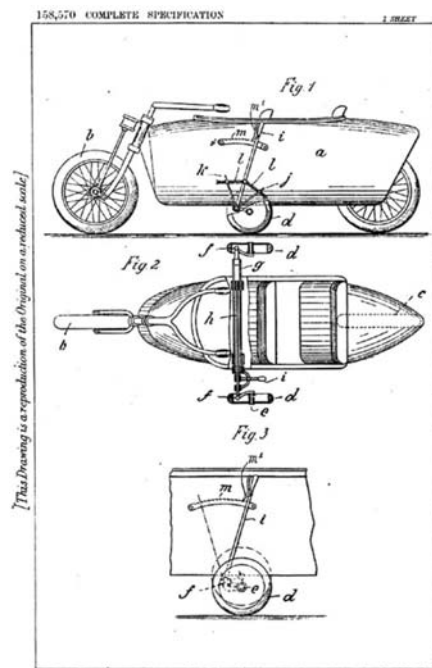
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Alfred Morgan patent, above, number 158,570 from 1922, seems to have inspired several monorack cars.

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while seating six within enveloping bodywork. The history and engineering content of the Gyrocar is colorful and deserves a dedicated book.

In the case of the counter-steered rhomboid wheel pattern types, the theory appears to be that the counter-steering front and rear wheels will increase maneuverability. According to contemporary reports the perception is that the handling is squirrely and abrupt.

Alfred Morgan's 1922 patent 158,570 covered a vehicle with direct handle-bar steering, retractable outrigger wheels, and tandem seating. The idea seems to have influenced the British Whitwood monocoar and the French Monotrace among others.

The Monotrace, offered from 1925-28, had a mid-rear horizontal single cylinder water-cooled engine and chain drive to the rear wheel. Direct steering to the front wheel was controlled

with a large half-round steering wheel. Tandem seating had the driver in front, and a long lever to raise and lower the small outrigger wheels. This version of the rhomboid idea continues right up to today with the Peraves Monotracer from Switzerland.

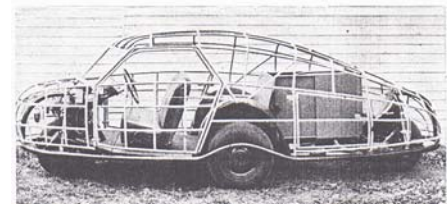
In terms of rhomboid proposals using four wheels in constant contact with the ground, Gabriel Voisin presented a scale model with a 7-cylinder radial engine, circa 1934. The French Van-



1913 Scripps Booth Bi-Autogo, **above** and **right**, pictured at the Petersen Automotive Museum. James Scripps Booth conceived the design at age 20, took four years to build the vehicle at a cost of \$25,000. The machine had an under-slung chassis and heavy steering due to excess caster angle with wheel-type steering and 3,200 lb weight. Length 184 inches, width 50 inches. Sheet aluminum over wood formed the body, using concealed door hinges. The driver sat in a single central seat, two passenger seats at rear. The main wheels were artillery type, the rear one driven, front steered, with smaller retractable outrigger wheels, in two pairs, for a total of six tires on the ground. The engine was an L-head 90 degree V8, 332 cid, 5.44 liters, 54 hp, with two pistons on each articulated connecting rod assembly. Other novelties were the compressed air starter, aluminum crankcase and gearbox casing, copper tube radiator draped over each side of the vehicle and enclosed chain drive to the rear wheel.

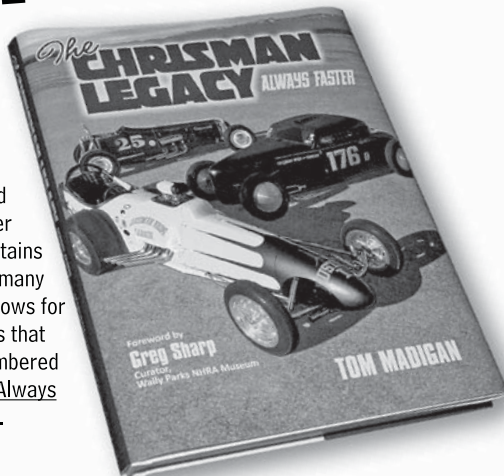


Gordon diamond-shaped car, **above** and **below**. This home-made prototype was featured in both *Popular Science* and *Popular Mechanics Magazine* in 1949. H. Gordon Hansen of San Lorenzo, California envisioned the car with steered front and rear single wheels with a driven central axle powered by a mid-rear Ford V8 engine. Two bench seats were meant to accommodate three people each. The rear bench was mounted directly over the center axle. The vehicle was 217 inches long, 80 inches wide, and 63 inches high at a weight of 3700 lbs, overall wheelbase 156 inches with 24-foot turning circle. Hansen drove the vehicle 10,000 miles. The car is pictured in the Harrah's collection in Reno, Nevada, 1981.



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# Editorial

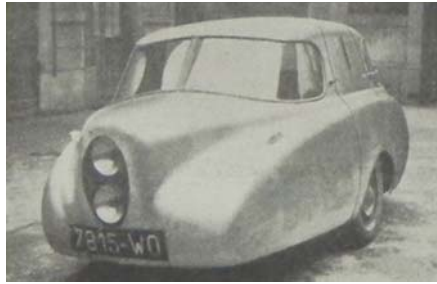
nod of 1958 was a compact with sliding doors, and very awkward aesthetics. Philippe Charbonneaux, designer of the Renault R16, among other cars, promoted a series of rhomboid wheel pattern cars both on his own and in collaboration with Sbarro. The Ellipsis, circa 1997, used Porsche six-cylinder power driving the center wheels. The drag coefficient was claimed to be 0.17 due to the elliptical shape of the vehicle and comprehensive aerodynamic detailing. An additional benefit of the rounded body shape is reduced susceptibility to head-on collisions. The later Sbarro Assystem, circa 2007, had a cartoonish appearance that detracts from the underlying concept.

The 2004 Deveze Mantys appears to be a sports or go-kart type vehicle. It is unclear if the idea got beyond the paper stage. The Changfeng Rhombus R-6, displayed at the 2007 Detroit Auto Show shows the difficulty of styling a car around the center wheels.

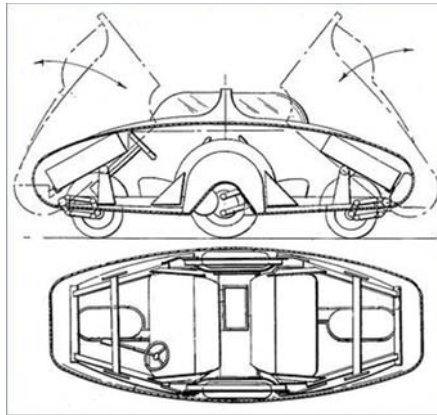
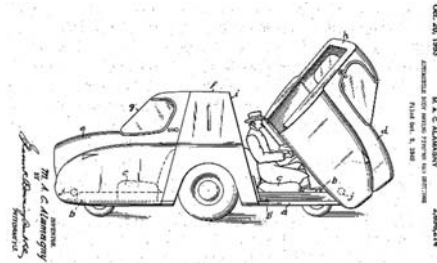
Designers and engineers are enraptured with the rhomboid wheel pattern idea as shown by the fact the vast majority of rhomboid vehicles of the last 110 years are proposals or design studies, with very few production examples. The idea is always for the future. It bears mentioning that we have yet to see draft animals with a single leg in front, two legs on the sides and a single leg at the rump. —A. Meyer



Pinfarina "X" from 1960, above. Four-door aerodynamic proposal with a driven rear wheel, steered front wheel and two outriggers placed to the rear of center. Drivetrain is a Fiat 1100cc water-cooled engine in a highly convoluted mid-rear arrangement, angled to the right rear corner of the vehicle. The left half of the presumably insulated rear compartment is used for luggage. Pinfarina did their best to make the odd wheel placement and proportions look normal, and did succeed with the upper portion of the bodywork, with a light and airy greenhouse and normal looking door cut lines. Three headlamps are arranged under a glass cover at the front. Pinfarina's design skill is shown by a smaller two-door companion model, the 1961 "Y" with conventional wheel placement but similar shape and proportion.



Marcel Alamagny proposed a rhomboid wheel pattern vehicle shortly after World War II. Apparently a prototype was constructed circa 1948, shown in the heavily-retouched photo illustration, above.



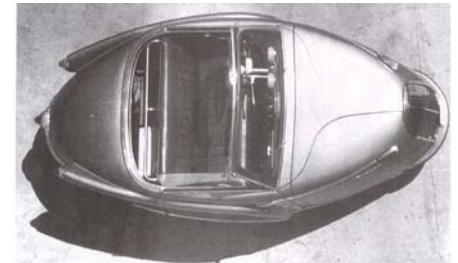
By 1953, Alamagny was issued patents, including US 2,656,214 regarding the symmetrical, tilting clamshell bodywork, above. The vehicle featured a central transverse-mounted Simca 5 engine with drive to the center axle. Steering acted on the front and rear single wheels. Passengers sat back-to-back. The vehicle demonstrated unconventional aesthetics and no mention was made of how passengers would deal with rain water and mud dripping from the clamshell body sections when opened.



This image from the book *Inside the Fisher Body Craftsman's Guild* demonstrates the continuing appeal of rhomboid wheel placement for designers. "Geza Loczi recently retired as head of Volvo's advanced studio in SoCal called Volvo Monitoring. He created this model, above, his sixth Guild entry, in 1964, the year he turned 20. Loczi's models were indeed futuristic, reflecting his own interests. This model, created with fiberglass after doing conceptual design in clay, was conceived as having a motorcycle-type suspension, central driving position, and diamond-shaped tire tread. The outrigger wheels at front were designed to retract when vehicle was at speed. Wheels are of sand-blasted brass with clear coat. Model was entered in the Open Category and earned Loczi a \$1,000 National Styling Scholarship award." - from *John L. Jacobus*.



Dr. Miroslav Nestorovic proposed the "Prvenac" circa 1959, above, and below. The prototype was constructed in the David Pajic factory in Belgrade. The vehicle was nearly elliptical in plan view, with a single, three-person bench seat and a removable roof. The bodywork was quite stylized including placing the headlamps behind the grille slats to compensate for the unusual proportions.



The Prvenac suspension, above, featured rhomboid wheel pattern with four equal-sized wheels. Single front and rear wheels steer, while the center axle was driven, powered by an air-cooled, two-stroke Tomos-Puch 250cc engine. The wheels were mounted on a tubular frame with articulation at the center axle. Springing came from two half-elliptic leaf springs, the theory being that as the wheels travel over bumps, the articulated frame would keep the car body level.



Peraves Monotracer, above, is currently produced in Winterthur, Switzerland. Rear wheel powered by a BMW K1200L T/M engine and sequential four speed gearbox with reverse. Front wheel steers. Bodywork in Kevlar composite with rollbar, and gullwing door on the left side. Tandem seating. Outrigger wheels are fully retractable, meant for low speed use only.





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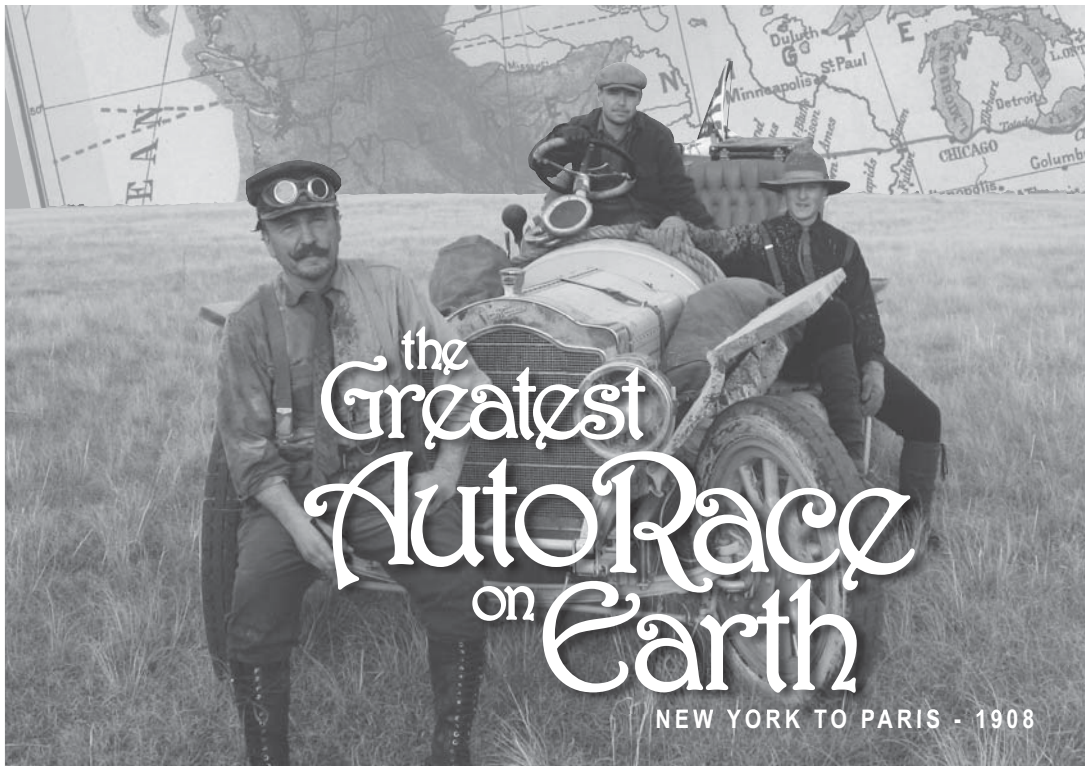
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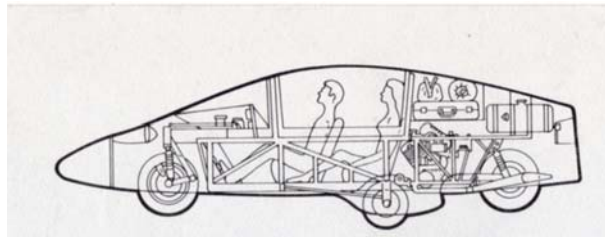
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The Autocycle, **above**, pictured at Expo '86 in Vancouver, BC, Canada, was a Jim Bede design offered by Tomorrow Corporation, Chesterfield, Missouri, starting 1982. The vehicle featured tandem seats, fiberglass body, steel tube frame, driven rear wheel, steered front, the outrigger wheels at center were flexibly mounted, it was legally a three-wheel motorcycle. The factory was listed in Fairhope, Alabama in publicity and plans for home-building the car were available. The Autocycle weighed 575 lbs, powered by a Honda 250cc two-cylinder with a five-speed gearbox for \$3995. Optional powertrain configurations: Kawasaki 305cc two-cylinder, belt drive, \$4655; Honda 450cc two-cylinder automatic, \$5545; Honda 750cc four-cylinder 5-speed, \$7195. Litestar 700, **above right**, weighed 820 lbs, was 194 inches long, 76 inches wide, 54 inches high, claimed drag coefficient of .092. A liquid-cooled shaft-drive motorcycle powerplant was listed, with a warrantee of up to 5 years, 50,000 miles. Distributed by Earthship Enterprises in San Diego, California, among others, with plants in Scranton, Iowa, and later Owosso, Michigan. The Pulse GCRV, or Ground Cruising Recreational Vehicle, **below**, was offered from 1985-1990 by Owosso Motor Car Co, Owosso, Michigan. Empty weight had increased to 1050 lbs.



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