

MY AMERICAN SAFARI

Further Adventures in the Aut

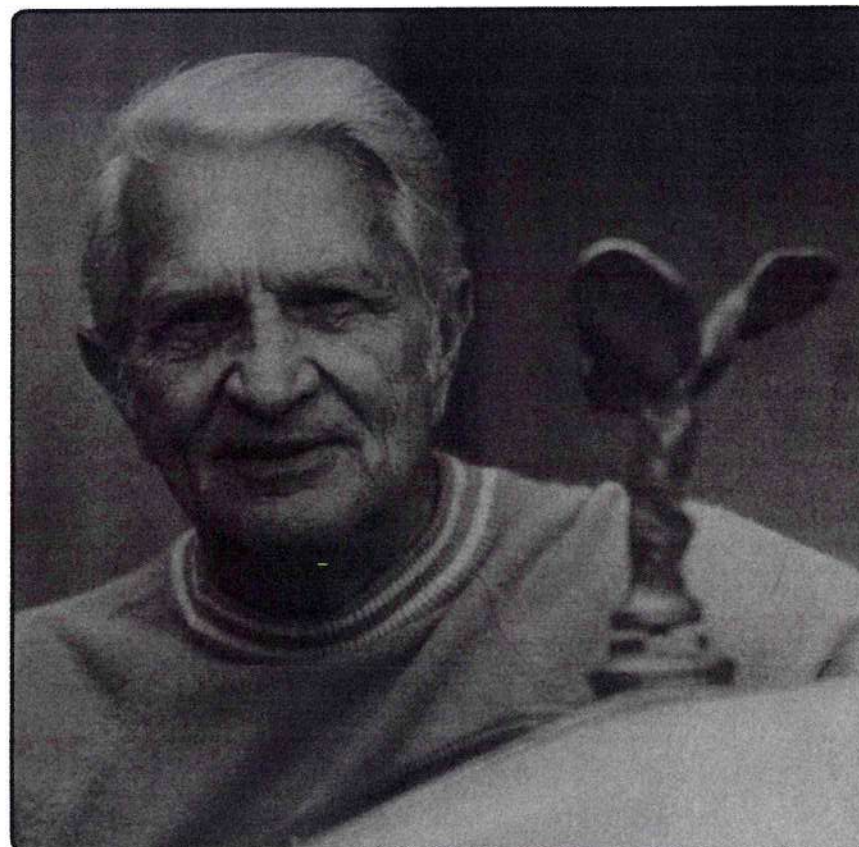
by Howard "Dutch" Darrin

Whoever thought that a dumb kid like me would fall into a strawberry patch? Luck was on my side from start to finish. Though looking back on it all puts more years behind me than I care to think of, it's fun recollecting, so if you like what I write I'll be happy. But if it gives you cause to wonder about the zaniness of it all just remember: The devil made me do it.

In the spring of 1907 I got my first break. Frank Roach, publisher of *Automobile Topics*, and a close friend of my father's, jokingly told me that any time I was ready he had a job for me. I was all of ten, crazy about cars, and raring to go, so I stopped by the offices of *Automobile Topics* and informed Mr. Roach I was set for any editorial spot that might be open. He took this generous offer in stride and indicating an old roll top desk he told me to go to work, as I was the new "clipping editor." Handing me a pair of giant shears and pointing to a stack of newspapers he told me to cut out any items referring to horseless carriages. I became, in my own mind, a "pro," and was actually salaried—until my Dad caught up with me. But I digress, so let me take up where I left off in "Disaster is my Business." (*AUTOMOBILE Quarterly*, Volume VII, Number 1.)

When I returned to the United States from Paris in the autumn of 1937 I was rather unfamiliar with the road qualities of the American automobiles. I knew from personal experience that stylists were not entirely to blame for those top heavy cars, and was highly critical of a condition that had existed for many years: the dictatorship of Engineering. Many heads of the industry were ex-engineers who dictated policies based on profits-before-logic and tradition-before-progress. But I did find one American car that was a thorough delight to me—the 1937 Cord 810.

Gordon Buehrig—a genius in his own time—had fostered a masterpiece with that Cord, and he did so, surprisingly, as both the actual creator of the car and as chief of styling—something nearly unheard of in the U.S. industry. It was always easier for me to follow through on my own ideas because I was never on the payroll of a major manufacturer as a full-time employee. But Buehrig was, and he still managed to see his idea through to production. He put a great amount of energy, ability and hard work into the 810; I ran into some of his models at Connersville in later years—alternates to what was actually produced—and all of them were equally outstanding. There is no doubt that his front end treatment made those of the Big Three obsolete.



omotive Jungle

and this was borne out by the 1942 and early postwar Lincoln Continentals, which used a very similar frontal design. As a strong "radiator man," with great dependence on grilles (like Rolls' and Packard's) to enhance my own body designs, I must say I was impressed. I bought a Cord and the car helped me decide to stay and build cars in America.

As I began looking around for a staff I was fortunate to encounter Rudy Stoessel and Paul Erdos, both past masters in coachbuilding. Rudy later formed the Coachcraft firm which is still in business today. I rented an old bottling works on Sunset Strip. After fixing the place up I didn't have the money to spend on plate glass windows, so we placed a plywood partition ten feet behind the store front and displayed our new cars in the open. The idea turned out to be a successful new twist as the cars were there in the open to be viewed by anyone and there were no salesmen around making the hard sell. You could stand there at night and hear the screech of brakes and see cars backing up and people getting out to examine our wares. Meanwhile, behind the partition, we could build several cars at a time.

I concentrated on Packards, knowing that by lowering the radiator I could make a very beautiful custom-bodied Packard 120 with little change in its basic structure. The first car we built on the Packard chassis was a two-passenger roadster for Dick Powell. Later we built a four-passenger model for Packard's annual dealer showing in Detroit. Arthur Fitzpatrick, who achieved fame as a commercial artist for Pontiac, was working for me at the time, and he and a friend drove day and night to get there in time. They were unfortunate and ran into a drunken driver who smashed one whole side of the car. They phoned me from Detroit with the bad news. The car was driveable, but by this time Packard decided that they didn't want to show any special cars because they thought it might hurt their regular business. I told the boys to drive our car into the proving grounds anyway, and park it off to the side of the road with the good side showing. It worked, because all the dealers arriving came upon our car, stopped and got out and looked it over. A great deal of enthusiasm was created—actually more than if the car had been shown formally. The Packard brass were furious and wouldn't speak to me for a while, but dealer pressure was so great they decided they ought to offer the car. One of the dealers was so insistent that he threatened to give up his franchise unless they took the model on!

One of the reasons that Packard was hesitant about selling our version was that we had built quite a few cars for them in Europe. In the old days, custom bodies were made largely of wood and covered with metal. The wood would warp in America under certain climatic conditions, and could result in unwelcome rattles. When he came to talk it over, Packard President Macauley looked at one of our cars and said, "Well, Darrin, I don't know if we want to take a chance on this—we have to put our name on it and stand behind it, you know." I suspected why he was reluctant, so I climbed up on the cowl and began jumping up and down. He nearly had a fit! "Get off of that car!" he said, "You'll ruin it, you'll ruin it for sure!" Of course he thought it was just sheet metal over wood, when in fact it had a cast aluminum cowl, and I could jump on it without damage. I asked if he thought it was strong enough. That was how I got Packard to approve the Darrin-Victoria for production.

Packard put the car into their catalogue. Our production was limited so their dealers were told they had to keep any Darrin on the floor for at least thirty days, whether it was sold or not. The company said that showroom floor-play increased 300% when a Darrin was on display.

The Packard-Darrin gleaned a lot of free advertising in addition to the company's own ambitious publicity campaign. One of the stunts we did to attract attention was to leave one of the cars in front of Romanoff's where many of the Hollywood personalities had lunch. We'd bribe the doorman to keep an empty space right by the door, so anyone alighting couldn't help but notice it. We also got a lot of free publicity, and made a little side money, by renting our cars to the studios for movies.

As time went on, we found that we couldn't keep up with all the orders for our Packards, so I went to Detroit, hoping to find a sub-contractor to build additional cars. Through the grapevine, Auburn-Cord President Roy Faulkner heard that there was a man from the West Coast looking for a plant. An appointment was made for us to get together. Faulkner wasn't too sure who I was. The name seemed familiar, but not the face. Then he said, "Oh yes, you're Dutch Darrin and you built custom bodies in Europe. I apologize. I thought you were one of those industrial designers—those very unhappy people who are never satisfied with their surroundings. When they visit your home their aesthetics are offended or their health is impaired by the fixtures in your powder room." During a very pleasant evening, we got together and agreed to build the Packard-Darrin at Connersville. These models turned out very well.

There was some talk about Darrin-Victorias losing rigidity because of their low bodies. Unfortunately Packard had furnished us some less rigid chassis for closed, instead of open, bodies and this did cause some minor problems, but they sent out kits to correct that mistake. In any case, according to Rudy Stoessel, our bodies were stiffened by the cast aluminum cowl bolted to the chassis at one of the weak spots, and owner letters that I have received over the years have never alluded to any structural weakness.

The arrangement with Connersville lasted until Auburn closed their automotive division, when we transferred the operation to Cincinnati, using the plant of Sayers and Scovill, the hearse and limousine builders. The Sayers' directors were there to see the first car off the line, followed closely by a hearse. Such strange partners. It was quite a sight.

One of the first four-passenger Darrin-Victorias was sold to Clark Gable. At the time, we had not yet installed the aluminum cowl and the hood was slightly longer. This car was sold through the Earle C. Anthony Packard agency, who had interested Clark in the body style. Anthony called me and

asked if I could come down to our factory and meet Gable. When I arrived he had just left. One of my boys said, "Guess who was here? . . . Clark Gable and Carole Lombard! They were really in a tizzy, so we'd better get to work and finish the body or we'll never see them again." I returned to Anthony's showroom as they were signing a contract. After I was introduced, I turned to Miss Lombard and said, "If you ever go down to the factory again the deal's off. My men are all in a state of shock!" Carole, who had a great sense of humor, promised me she'd stay clear. What wonderful people those two were!

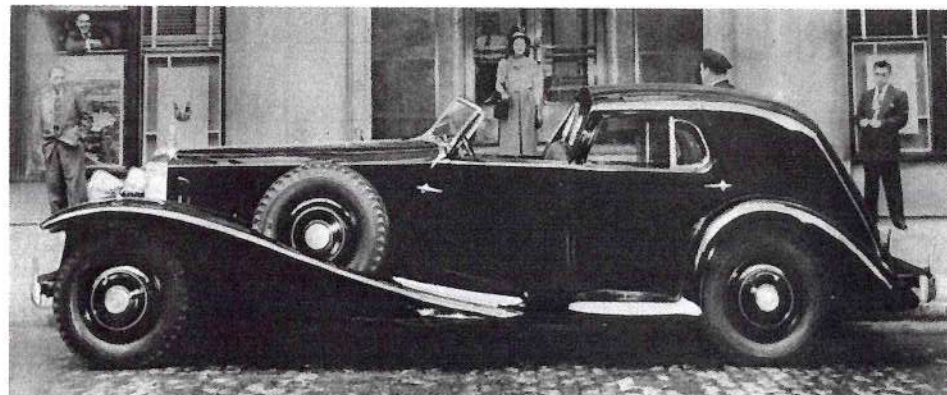
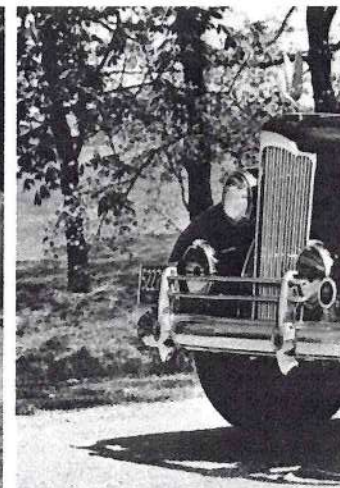
Gable later said he was having a little trouble with his fans on account of the Darrin's low doors. He had trouble keeping them out of the car whenever he stopped at intersections. He thought he had better sell it. I told him that would be no problem—that I had a customer who had seen and liked his Packard, a girl from Texas. I told her she could have it and the mere thought of sitting in a car owned by Clark Gable was just too much. I asked \$3000 more on that basis alone and told her so, but it didn't matter. I gave Gable his money back and we became good friends. In return, he went out of his way to help me sell Darrins, introducing me to his actor friends and inviting me to several parties. It was at one of these that I met Countess Dorothy di Frasso. That gave me the opportunity to build my proudest achievement.

Dorothy di Frasso was like Daisy Fellows and Elsa Maxwell: She loved to give parties. In fact, she sometimes gave several a month. It wasn't that she was film-struck, she just liked movie people. The Countess was a great rival of Constance Bennett's; although they were warm personal friends, they always tried to outdo each other. Miss Bennett had a special-bodied Rolls-Royce with a canework passenger compartment, and it really bugged the Countess not to have something equally elegant. She took me to see the Bennett car, and asked if I could do something for her that would at least put her on even terms. I had built a special Rolls in England that I thought was equally attractive and original, so I felt I might be able to fill the assignment. I took the order and she turned over her old Phantom. I said, "You're going to spend all that on this old chassis? Why not pick up a brand new chassis and just throw this one away?" No soap.

The body for the di Frasso was finished at our Sunset Strip shop by Rudy Stoessel and Paul Erdos. It was made of aluminum, and there was no sign of a weld anywhere. It was so smooth it needed no undercoat, and could easily have been polished and left unpainted. Never, in all my years as a coachbuilder, have I seen anything like the bodywork Rudy and Paul executed on this automobile. Of all the cars I designed, this was the best constructed. I owe a debt to Dorothy di Frasso, without whom I would never have had the opportunity to build the car, and to current owner Howard Bennett, for his love affair with what he calls "The Lady."

When the Countess went East, she left the car with us. We rented it to several movie companies—they used it in *Midnight* with Claudette Colbert and made some lovely overhead shots of it. Elliot Springs, president of Springs Mills, Inc., bought the car later, and used it in many of his advertisements, with Gussie Moran getting out of it, the caption saying something like, "She just forgot her petticoat." I think Springs put out ten different ads, which naturally helped us a lot through their wide circulation. At the time I received orders for two duplicates from Darryl Zanuck, but we had so many orders then for Packard-Darrins we asked Darryl for permission to put off the building of his cars until we had larger facilities.

One of my early Packard-Darrin sales was to Errol Flynn, whom I had



Very few people knew that side of his character. He rarely laughed at anything I ever said to him but I caught him several times asking his manager, "Did you hear what Dutch just said?"

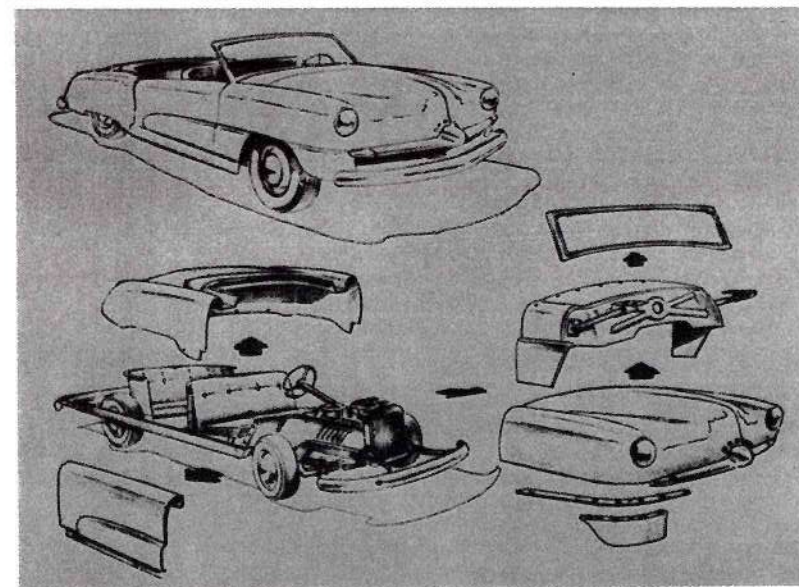
Though we got to be good friends, I only made him laugh once. When his PBY sank in Lake Mead, he sent a diver down to bring up the instruments and baggage, including a blue serge suit. He had the suit dry cleaned; they did a beautiful job, but it had shrunk. I told Howard he could always stoop. Being quite deaf, he put his hand to his ear and asked me to repeat. I said, "Stoop, you big so and so." He cracked up. For the first time in all the while I knew him. Later on that day we were changing clothes in the Racquet Club in Palm Springs and his valet handed him a sports coat, saying, "Mr. Hughes, don't you think you should have this cleaned?" Howard said, "Yes, but isn't this yours?" The valet said it was. Howard had borrowed it. Asked if he wanted it back, the valet replied, "Hell, no, I don't want people thinking I'm wearing your old clothes!"

The Naval Air Corps heard I had lived in Deauville, France, for some fifteen summers and had flown extensively over that area while I was representing the DeHavilland Company. They called me and I took their examination. Hughes sent them the only letter of recommendation I guess he ever wrote. Later I received notice that I wasn't qualified for active duty. I got hold of Howard, who promised to find out what was wrong. It seemed that Naval Intelligence had discovered me to be a habitual drunkard! A previous residence of mine had been rented by some character who nightly climbed in the second story window somewhat plastered. Naval Intelligence thought it was me. Hughes told them, "That wasn't Dutch Darrin. I have never seen him take a drink in his life—if he would he might be half a guy." Later the Navy advised me that I was qualified to serve. As it turned out they had selected me because of the impending invasion of France. The landing site was several miles from Deauville, and they felt I would be invaluable.

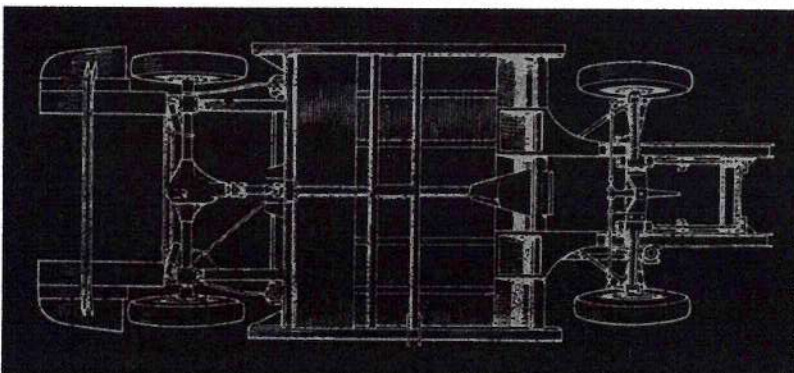
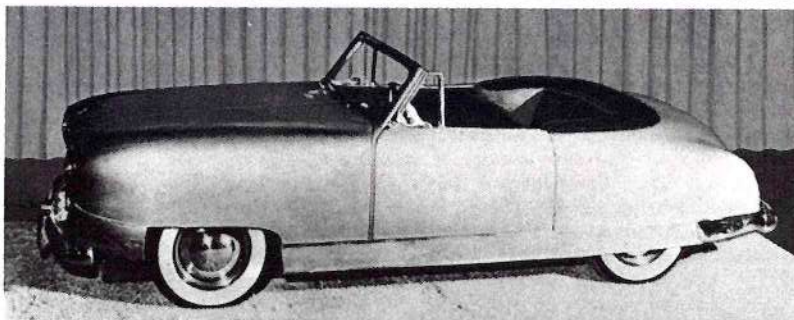
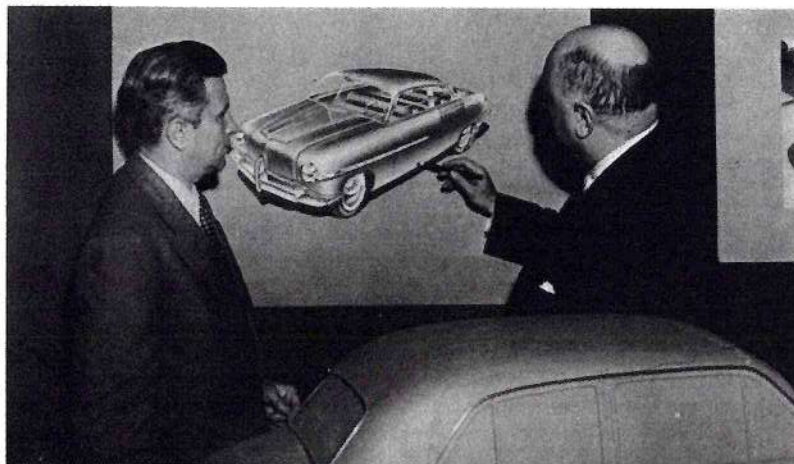
We closed our flying school on V-E Day, and converted the planes to crop dusters, working over the fields around Willow, California. We lost one out of the four planes. It was worse than combat in France. I was fortunate and only suffered a rash from the rice, but a few months of that activity was enough, and when the planting season ended I returned to Hollywood.

Before long I rented my old store on Sunset Boulevard and built some special Cadillacs and Lincoln Continentals, which in fact were the first post-war customs and were not subject to any price freezes. Actually the cut-down doors and follow-through fenders gave a completely new look with a minimum of work. The door glass ended four inches below the top of the standard door, so I was able to cut it down as I did previously on the Flynn Clipper. These cars were shown on Sunset Strip where we mounted a large circus tent on a car lot and displayed five of them. We sold perhaps fifteen cars at around \$8600 apiece before I went to New York at the request of Mathis of Matford-France, to build a prototype for that company.

Around this time Charlie Schwartz, who was a Dillon, Reid partner with Dodge, heard I was in town and took me to see the Lehmann brothers who were planning to build a small car, a three-wheeler, to be sold through some of the retail stores they controlled. Lehmann gave me the assignment of building this car, but I talked them out of the three-wheel idea. I felt it would be more expensive to build and not too practical, since we couldn't get component parts very readily and would have to manufacture too many of them ourselves. The Lehmann car was to be of fiberglass—the first of its kind. It had a lot of new ideas, including four fiberglass body parts. I patented most of these characteristics, but my attorney failed to patent the



Above: Mrs. Pattie Darrin helps Dutch and his Kaiser achieve the Grand Prix d'Honneur at Paris in September of 1950.
Below: Only five basic fiberglass panels were required in Darrin design for lengthened, streamlined Crosley Hotshot, 1947.



Top: Joseph W. Frazer (right) shows Dutch what the Frazer car almost became. Dutch's expression seems adequate comment.
Center: Darrin convertible for Lehmann, 1946, with unique frame (bottom) made up of square main frame with front sub-assembly.

I never did get paid by Packard for the Clipper. They pressured me to take Darrin-Victoria orders instead, and then cancelled. My original Clipper design called for a sweeping front fenderline that carried right on through the doors to the rise of the rear fender, similar to the custom Clipper I built later for Errol Flynn. But Packard shortened the sweep to fade away at mid-door. This was done as a hedge because no one knew if the through-fenderline would sell.

It seems that any Darrin design for production is not considered outstanding unless at some time it is attributed to someone other than myself. Packard introduced the Clipper with a series of ads entitled, "A Star Is Born," including pictures of the Darrin Victoria and telling how they had developed the Clipper to surpass it. The ad was pretty inaccurate. The best compliment they paid me was later saying that "three international designers" combined to create the Clipper. Now I was the only international designer who was even let into the factory at that time, so you might construe their statement to mean that I was the *equal* of three designers. A very nice boost, but it was not meant that way.

It was all very sad in the end because Packard styling vandalized the design by throwing on huge gobs of clay along the wheelbase in 1941. The Clipper never recovered. Still I feel that had they continued the Clipper a lot longer after the war they could not only have saved a lot of money on dies but perhaps extended their life in the jungle.

About this time war clouds were gathering. We formed a troop of cavalry at the Riviera Polo Grounds to patrol the immediate coastline. It was authorized by the newly-formed State Guard. Our captain was promoted to major, and the command fell to me. My first lieutenant was Ronald Reagan, who is today the commander-in-chief of the whole California militia. Most of the troopers were recruited from the polo players at Riviera and Will Rogers Uplifters Clubs who furnished the ponies. Tim Holt was second lieutenant, Aiden Roark, one of the top polo players was first sergeant and so on.

Prior to and during this tour of duty I was a recruiting officer at the Canadian Aviation Bureau at the Roosevelt Hotel. We supplied pilots for the Eagle Squadron being trained under the command of Air Marshall Billy Bishop in Canada. The operation was completely illegal of course, as at the time we had not entered the war. The German American Bund used to take pot shots at us and the FBI would raid us from time to time, but we would always get an anonymous call in time to move our papers into another room. President Roosevelt knew of the operation that was under way in many major cities but officially disowned the project. We had all hoped to continue on with the Canadian Air Force but our entry into the war cancelled all commissions in foreign armies.

As a reward for our services we received a contract War Training Service Flight School at Boulder City and Las Vegas, where I held the rank of Field Commander. Howard Hughes used to fly his Catalina to Boulder City to make various tests and photographs of take-offs and landings, to illustrate the characteristics of water-surface navigation.

Hughes is one of the finest pilots with whom I have ever flown, and a man of extraordinary genius as well. He is very quiet, but when he does speak he says something worth hearing. He would usually arrive in tennis shoes and an old beat-up pair of pants, carrying a bag of cookies. We'd drive into Las Vegas and sometimes I would reach over for a cookie. He'd grab my wrist and say, "Uh-uh, those are homemade and they are for me." Every Saturday night he'd give a big party and invite all the people he could round up. He had a keen sense of humor although he didn't often show it.

a chassis that encroached on the rear seat. The upshot was that I had my low body in spite of chassis error. By raising the roof (not the beltline, on that I held firm) we were able to create enough headroom to compensate for the old-fashioned chassis' encroachment into passenger space, but the rear seatroom was affected adversely. Studebaker had the same problem with Loewy Studios' Starliner, and they too sacrificed the rear seat cushion instead of redesigning the age-old chassis. Again with the short wheelbase light Henry J I was promoting, using Kaiser sheet metal parts where possible, I met the same fate. (*AUTOMOBILE Quarterly*, Volume IX, Number 3.) Can you beat that for insanity? All chassis are made today the way I was recommending in 1950.

The sad part about the Henry J blunder is that even then most of the engineers knew I was right but let impulses other than the scientific rule them. I am not afraid to label it as "the great conspiracy." It is easy to pick out reasons for the decline of this fine company, but I sincerely believe that my failure to sell the 1951 Kaiser—and the sheet metal parts eliminating many new dies and tools—is the basic reason behind the eventual demise of the Willow Run operation. Visualize a long-hooded Kaiser with a sporty body for \$1200.

Mr. Frazer supported me in those days, but of course he was not of great influence by then. As I write this I've received word of Joe's passing, and it grieves me greatly. He was like an older brother to me in those years, and for the industry itself, he was a very important man—above all an *honest* man, and one who was invariably as good as his word. I was proud to be associated with Joe Frazer.

After I finished work on the 1951 Kaiser I took one of the first production models and my wife and I headed for Europe. We landed in Liverpool and drove to London, where the press took pictures of the car. Then I took the ferry over to France and drove to Paris and the Riviera, where we rented a villa. I took another European trip in 1953, when I went to Italy and visited the Ghia factory in Turin. Ghia had been dead for several years, but the company continued to be, in my opinion, the best in Italy. I brought back two Ghia-bodied Fiats for the New York Automobile Show, and sold one to Lana Turner, but she turned it in on a new Kaiser-Darrin. This was a big surprise to me, and kind of a thrill, because I had considered Carrozzeria Ghia a great design firm, as I do Bertone and Pininfarina also.

On a separate stand at the same show, the Kaiser-Darrin was displayed. Fortunately for us it was right next to the Corvette. During the course of the show the various exhibits were interviewed for radio and naturally only a few minutes could be given to each. When the interviewer came to our stand, I had a beautiful girl sitting in the car, so he made up a few extra questions. We were able to hold him at our stand for a full five minutes. He wanted to know what happened to my French accent, as I was known at that time as "Darrin of Paris." I told him that I reserved that for General Motors. We got a beautiful interview; they opened and closed the sliding doors and ogled car and girl. After the show I got a telephone call from the head of publicity at Kaiser, who informed me that Mr. Kaiser was very angry with me because I mentioned General Motors. I said, "Listen, you tell Mr. Kaiser how much time we received and how much they devoted to the others, and then I don't think he'll be very put out."

I discussed the Kaiser-Darrin in my first *AUTOMOBILE Quarterly* article, but one aspect of the story that few know is the change made by Kaiser-Frazer in the original Darrin design—a prototype that I had built in California. Altogether sixty-two prototypes were produced, but when it entered the pro-

duction-planning stage it was found that the headlights were too low. Some states had laws specifying a minimum headlight height. It was obvious that a change would be required in the production models, but I feel they went about it entirely wrong.

The engineers lifted the line of the front fenders to achieve more height. This bent the middle section and gave the car an "uphill" look. Their chief engineer was the first to tell me how sorry he was about it. The better solution would have been to merely use larger wheels and tires than the Henry J units adopted. As a sports car, the Darrin needed more rubber there anyway. There would have been no need for change in body or chassis, and the whole thing would have looked and performed much better.

A facet of the Kaiser-Frazer caper that was pleasing to me was having my name on several hundred thousand cars. Italians like Farina and Bertone are accustomed—rightly so—to "signing" their names, but no other American designers were able to do this, for various reasons. I considered having my name on the 1951 models and the Kaiser-Darrin quite an honor. Raymond Loewy, whose designers did such a fine job on the 1953 Studebaker coupé, was one of those whose name never appeared. Loewy often asked me how I was able to do it. Actually it was due to the very generous contract Joe Frazer had written for me early in the Graham-Paige days, and renewed by Edgar Kaiser.

After the designing of the 1951 Kaiser I was employed to develop a new car for Panhard, a sports car, which I took to France and showed the Panhard brothers. I formed a company over there to build it. The Panhard was a fresh design from the chassis up. It was an enjoyable project, as it certainly made a silk purse out of a sow's ear.

After the Panhard project I went back to the "plastic surgeon" business with prototypes for Willys and DKW. I have always tried to take the "surgeon" title seriously in these facelift programs. To justify it one must make the fewest incisions and grafting consistent with his goal, rather than attempt wholesale remodeling. If anything is sacrificed it should be cost—never the compromise of the product. Oftentimes the least number of changes is apt to bring out the desired improvement. The Willys project occurred in 1954, when Kaiser-Willys were still thinking about passenger cars, and was developed as a possible 1956 facelift. I started with a standard Aero-Eagle hardtop, extended the rear fenders and added taller, slimmer taillamps. Then I redesigned the front end along the lines of the Kaiser-Darrin, with a relatively small grille and clean appearance. With Kaiser almost immediately out of the passenger car business, it was of course never taken beyond the prototype stage.

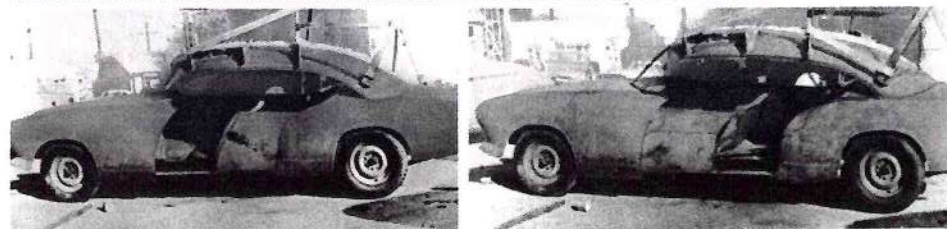
The DKW came about in 1956, when I was approached by Robert Heidreich and Milo Reckow, two distributors for foreign car parts, with a proposal to build a two-seat sports car body on the DKW-Auto Union sedan chassis, using the DKW's unorthodox three-cylinder two-cycle engine and front wheel drive. They felt the mating of this economical package with some striking body work would result in a highly saleable small sports car. I tried to discourage them by stating the expense involved, but they were quite serious, and engaged me to create a quarter-scale model. Henri Lindsey, owner of Flintridge Motors in Montrose, became interested and supplied a new DKW. Retaining all body and internal body parts, wiring and sub-assemblies and merely adding seven outer sheet metal parts, we completely transformed the DKW. The rear end trunk design was especially interesting, and a new styling departure at the time, running back with a slight slope and then sharply turning under and descending ten inches or so to reach approximately

rear license plate, which was hinged to cover the gasoline cap. Several years later I got a call from Ford, who had adopted this particular assembly on their cars; they said they were being sued by someone who claimed to be the inventor. Inasmuch as *Auto Industry* had published versions of the Darrin-invented license plate-gas cap cover, would I testify that it was spring loaded? At the time I didn't realize that I had any rights of my own in the matter since I hadn't patented the device. Anyway, I mentioned travel expenses to Ford. I never heard anything further. I expect they had enough documentation to prove that I was the original inventor and not the man who claimed to be.

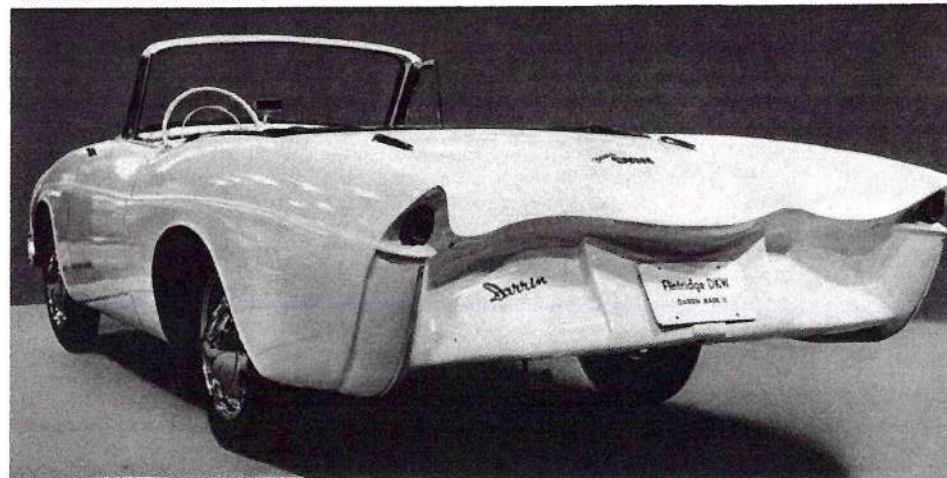
Meanwhile, my project with the Lehmann brothers had been stalled. Even with the four-wheeled car, it was found that we couldn't even get rear ends and gearboxes as the suppliers were committed to the established manufacturers, so the project was abandoned. It did lead me into a side trip with Juan Domingo Perón who found out about my work on the Lehmann design. The Argentine Consul approached me in 1946, proposing that I forward all material possible to President Perón. The car was about 600 pounds lighter than any other of similar size and extremely comfortable, and it was thought it might be just the thing for the South American market. I was interested because I had always wanted to build this kind of car in quantity. The Consul asked me for pictures of the design. I said I had a film that showed all of the car's mechanical features, including torsion bars and the unorthodox low-slung body style. The Consul asked to have the film, but I cautioned him to edit out the inapplicable portions of the reel before formally presenting it to Perón. In his haste he neglected my instructions and sent it directly to Buenos Aires. The government had a big showing in front of a dignified audience, including Madame Perón. In the middle of the reel was a short insert that had slipped in accidentally, showing a young starlet, in a kidding way, trying to take her coat off. It wasn't at all vulgar, but to the Argentine upper crust, it looked like a strip tease, and that was enough to infuriate President Perón, who thought it was a slur on his wife's name or something. He fired the Consul and, of course, the car never got anywhere. Perón finally did buy one of my designs—probably without knowing it—in the big Kaiser sedan, which was marketed as the "Carabela" in his country from 1958 through 1962. I was still receiving royalties up to a few years ago, so it turned out very well in the end.

I did manage to apply the concepts of the Lehmann car to a Crosley program I became involved in during 1947. Crosley wanted a new design. There are no photographs of the finished mock-up, though the drawing and in-process model shown herewith present a good idea of what it involved: in essence an effort to lengthen and streamline the Crosley. The car was to have been built by Hayes Body, but Crosley was never able to budget it—a shame, because it was a simple concept, one that they could have produced at minimal cost and sold, I think, with some success.

Then there was the 1951 Kaiser, which I designed in the autumn of 1948. This car was an entirely new approach in automotive architecture; its ultra-low aspect was achieved by new departures in construction—a spare tire mounted under the trunk floor, curved doors extending into the roof, and a chassis contour allowing a much lower rear seat, the last achieved by re-contouring the traditional chassis "hump" from the rear axle forward. The production Kaiser did not entirely follow all these conceptions, and I was forced to accept certain "refinements." It took quite a few years for the industry at large to understand that my body design principles for the car—the lowness, et al.—were correct, but could not be properly developed with



Top: Traditional elegant grille decorating final clay model of Dutch's proposed sporting Packard, with single door (center) allowing access to front or rear seat. Below: Unique rear sculpture of 1956 Darrin DKW.



war was threatening in the Middle East and all commercial ventures of this type were delayed. It's the only car I know of that was photographically blown up from quarter-scale models from which wooden die molds were perfectly taken without any drawings whatsoever. It is, as you can see, still quite contemporary and could easily be produced. The dies necessary to build it are still in Israel.

In 1962 we received an order from National Car Leasing for 200 special Buicks, Oldsmobiles and Pontiacs, which we were supposed to alter to look like foreign cars. (There was a big import leasing demand, but they feared service problems—though today, foreign machinery comprises a sizeable part of the leasing business.) We went ahead and made some prototypes. National accepted the designs and we began building the parts, which were very inexpensive. Then we got the news that, although General Motors had assured us there would be no great change for 1963, the entire line of compacts was being revised, and we would have to start again from scratch. It would take five or six months, and by then they'd probably be getting out still another design. Neither the rental company nor I wanted to push the idea further.

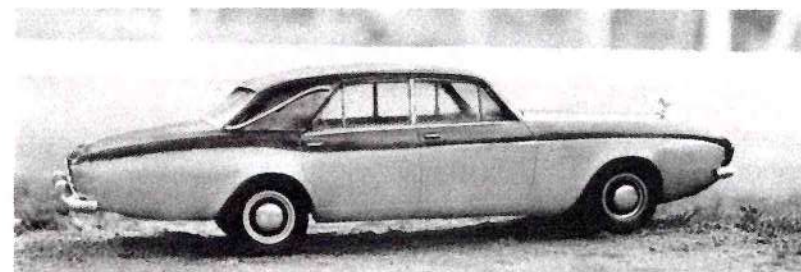
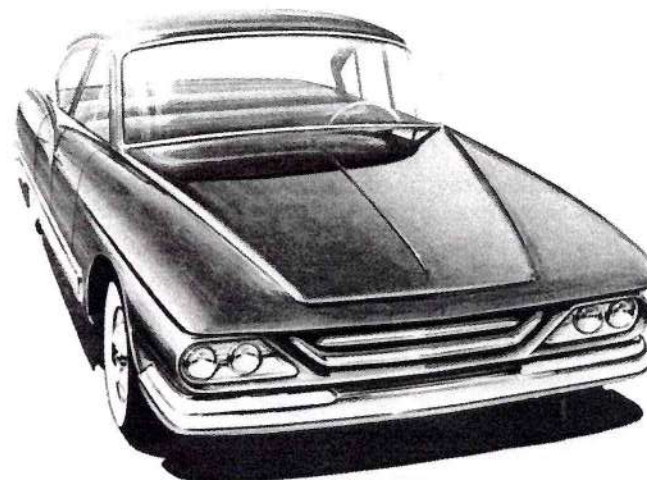
What have I been up to since? Well, in 1965 one of my friends at the Rolls-Royce agency in Beverly Hills showed me a picture of the new Silver Shadow, and I saw in it the possibility of reviving the custom body business. I started making some one-eighth scale models corresponding to what I thought a Rolls-Royce enthusiast would buy. I was rather conservative, as they had warned me they would be very strict on changes to the unit body. My first model was what I considered close to Rolls tradition. Then I met Peter Zage, a New York dealer who told me to go as far as I liked regardless of tradition. He said he wanted a big radiator, much higher than standard, and a Silver Cloud bumper. "I want you to go the limit," he told me. I found it hard not to let this vote of confidence go to my head and result in something too far out! In a short time we had made up another model to Zage's specifications. We used the larger radiator and extended fenders to bring back the classic look. I think this helps balance the car, because I feel the lines at the front should be approximately balanced by those of the rear—not the practice on American four-door sedans, which tend to have long backs and relatively short front ends.

When Zage received pictures of our second model, he phoned me and said we should build number one right away. I said, "Listen, this is only a mock-up, a scale model." He said, "Build it anyway"—and shipped me a Rolls to work with. We started construction immediately, and did a few things differently. Instead of making, as in the old days, a conventional custom body, we approached the car in such a way that we could put it into semi-production without the expense of steel dies. We used all-aluminum castings that were very light. It made an enormous difference, and otherwise we couldn't have built the car at all. At present, we are on the third set of parts and will be able to build bodies in six or eight weeks including complete paint and trim. We were fortunate enough to get a distributor who will handle the entire West Coast—Ray Carver, a Newport Beach Rolls-Royce dealer. It seems that this is going to be a very happy phase of my life, because I am back where I want to be, as a coachbuilder, where I can really conduct the kind of operation that pleases me most.

So life continues to be as rewarding for me as ever. In my safari through the automotive jungle I have met some wonderful people, travelled widely, and added, I hope, something to the profession. It isn't the easiest business, but most of us have stood it fairly well: Indeed, when all is said and done, I don't think I would have missed it for all the world. ♦



Top: Darrin conversion of Pontiac Tempest for National Car Leasing, 1962. Center: Still working with his 1951 Kaiser design, Dutch proposed this facelift for 1962 Argentine Kaiser Carabela. Bottom: Darrin's Rolls-Royce Silver Shadow saloon, now in full swing.





Top: The sweeping lines of Darrin's Panhard were a stark contrast to production models. Center: The Willys proposal involved extended fenders and a Darrin-type grille on the 1956 Aero-Eagle. Bottom: Dutch's elegant four-door design for Illian, 1959.



the level of the trunk floor. At present, most rear end designs employ similar concave treatment, allowing for improved trunk space and little goodies like "spoilers."

We called our creation the "Flintridge DKW-Darrin" sports car. The prototype was ten inches longer and five and one-half inches lower than the original two-door, but just as wide. Overall length went to 180 inches on the 92-inch wheelbase. The car was shown in Los Angeles at the dealers' auto show, and acceptance seemed assured, so we engaged Woody Woodill to fabricate the necessary reinforced fiberglass body panels. We planned to produce about 300 cars annually and sell them for less than \$3000 each, but had only built twenty or thirty of them by the time Woody found he was unable to finance further production.

Around 1955 I had taken over the marketing of Kaiser-Darrins as Kaiser pulled out of the passenger car industry. I purchased a number of the cars from the factory, and my son Bob and I put some Cadillac engines in them, dropped the "Kaiser" nomenclature, and sold them out of California between 1955 and 1958. The powerful V-8 engine produced some racing successes. Mrs. Briggs Cunningham, for example, won at Torrey Pines. But the supply was soon exhausted and the car passed into history. Sadly, I have never been able to find one of these V-8's, though better than half of the 435 Darrins are known to exist at the present time.

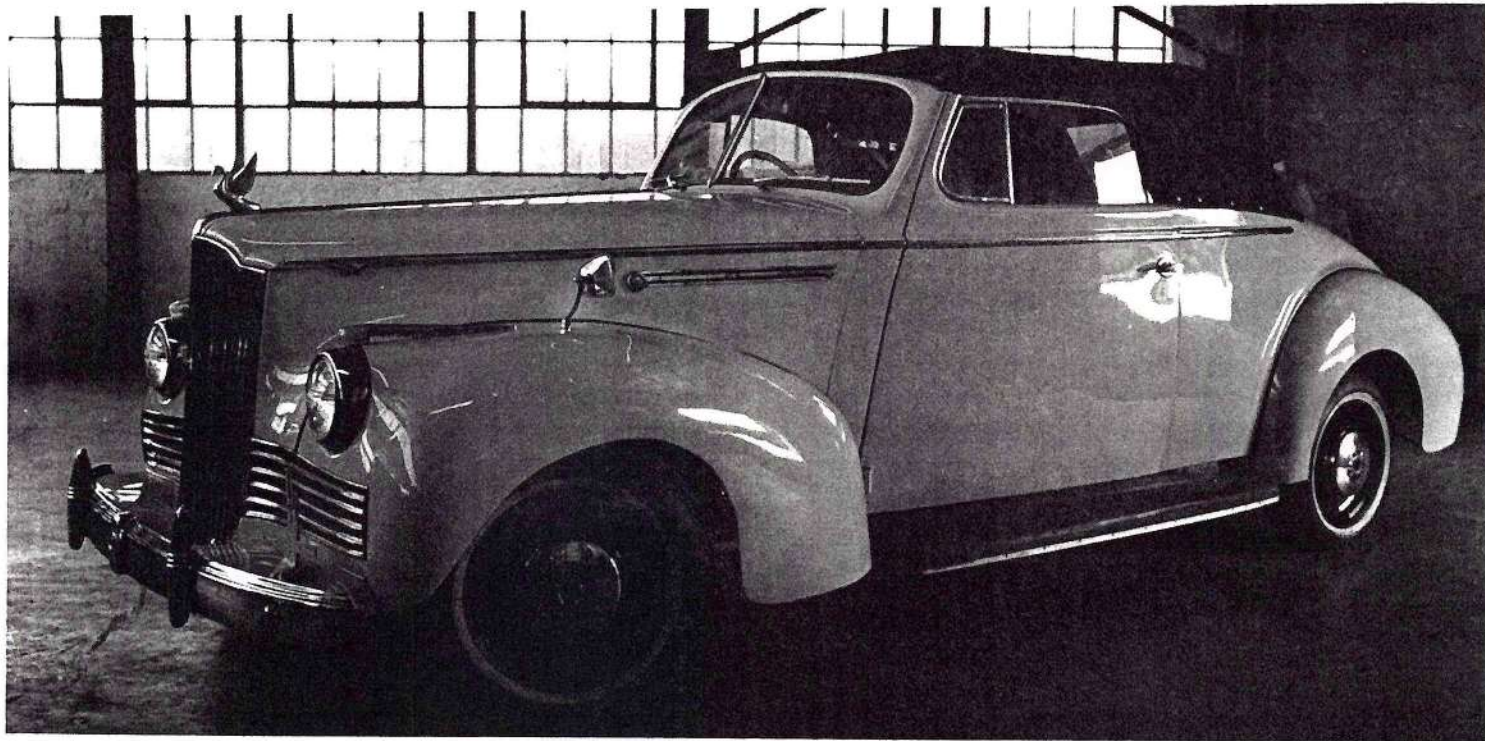
It seems that many a stylist has a notion that he believes would have saved the venerable marque of Packard, and I am no exception. My idea came into being in 1955, shortly after the Studebaker-Packard merger. In April of 1955 I was approached by an S-P patent attorney who asked me to develop a sporting body with sliding doors on the production Packard chassis. Packard Division proposed furnishing me with a chassis for a prototype, which, when complete, could be displayed at various auto shows to test public reaction. Though busy with the DKW and Kaiser-Darrin projects at the time, I was of course enthusiastic about working with Packard again and said I could handle design and production of the bodies for the car.

The architecture for my Packard began with a stretched-wheelbase Kaiser-Darrin I had been working on for Henry Kaiser—a two-door car with *four* access openings, one for each seat. Each door, mounted on runners, was designed so as to slide backward, giving access to the front seat, and forward as well, opening the rear. Closed, it stood in an intermediate position, cutting off access to both compartments at the same time. To ease its use, the door was power-activated by electric window winders.

In overall design, my Packard presented a relatively slim, classic-inspired grille in the shape that is Packard's alone—something I considered essential to the resurrection of the Packard image on a modern car.

Shortly after the merger, Studebaker-Packard decided to do away with all development of luxury Packards, and swept away all their plans for the future along these lines—their own styling department's as well as my two-door/four-door sporting automobile. It never proceeded past the full-size mock-up shown here. As I said in my first article, disaster is my business. By this time I was used to it.

In 1959 my design services were engaged by Illian, the ex-Kaiser—then Studebaker—dealer in Haifa, Israel. This car was to be in the Lincoln Continental class, with four doors and an "Italian" flavor. We made a quarter scale model, took some photographs and enlargements of its contours, and then constructed wooden forms for the fabrication of its fiberglass body panels. Al Sharp Engineering constructed elaborate demountable dies. The project cost Illian \$150,000, a considerable sum for a firm of their size, but



Mr. Bubb's 1942 "110" Convertible from So. Africa. Letter on preceding page.

Dear Carol:

Greg Smith advised me some time ago that he had received a shipment of PI name tags from you, and I have been somewhat negligent in getting a check off to cover their cost. I hereby assume the position for punishment, and herewith enclose our check in the amount of \$49.75.

We feel that these name tags will greatly aid us at our meetings, since we have new members just about every time we get together, and names are hard to remember when they're thrown at you 30 or so at a time!

We appreciate also the price break you are giving us on these, as we appreciate all of the excellent assistance and cooperation we have received from PI National since our "birth of a Region" a little over a year ago. I might add that in all that time I have never heard a member criticize PI National. Nor do I have anything but praise to offer, myself.

I hope we can come out sometime in the next year for the Membership Meet or National Tour. This summer is out because we're going to England, but maybe after that we can make a try at the "longest distance" trophy, or whatever it's called.

Again, thanks for your very able assistance.

Sincerely,
Stephen C. Henderson,
President, Indiana Region
P.I., Rushville, Indiana

Gentlemen,

Enclosed are two photos. One of my 1939 V-12 coupe-roadster. I believe there are only a few of these in existence, and the other photo is a rare 1939 Darrin built on a super 8 chassis. It was originally owned by Maximino Avila Comacho, whose brother was president of Mexico at that time. Maximino Comacho was a great international playboy. I bought it in Mexico last November, and it is at present being restored completely. I also have a 4-door 1940 Darrin convertible that is being restored and I will send a photo when it is finished, sometime around the first of 1975.

Sincerely,
John J. Thompson
1841 S. E. 7th Street
Ft. Lauderdale, Fla. 33316

P.S. Enclosed is a check for \$8.00. Would you please send me an owners manual for the 64 page 1940 180.



Summer 1975

The big banquet room looked very festive by contrast. The extensive projects table was very impressive and a club record was established for project sales. Vendors were also busy selling their wares and finally the tremendous banks of food was brought in with the participants resulting in gorging themselves to a degree never before enjoyed. It certainly wasn't raining inside!

Jerry Kill, after receiving a rousing ovation for his tourmastership asked his wife, Faye, and their family to share in the applause since they had all worked so hard for this event. He extended a cordial welcome to everyone and made specific mention that all the seminars had been taped for those who didn't take notes or weren't able to attend all the meetings. They will also be available to the membership across the land upon request. Mr. Kill then introduced our President, Fred Mauck.

Fred introduced the National Board of Regents along with the endless array of out of state guests. He further revealed to us the financial condition of our organization, the accomplishments of the past year along with the goals to be achieved. Particularly, he stressed the urgency of attending the National Tour this summer to San Antonio along with the responsibilities of being the official car and club for the Bi-Centennial Celebration.



President, Fred Mauck reviewed the accomplishments of PI.

Bill Lauer, club founder, then took the podium to award the Edith Soest Memorial Award to the most outstanding region for Packards International for the past year. The factors that determine the winning region are:

1. Quality of regional newsletter
2. Membership growth
3. Participation rate
4. Quality and number of regional events
5. Participation at National Tour
6. Leadership to National Board

It was with great pleasure that this year's winner was our Oregon Region. The award was accepted by Bill Terpening who was in attendance from this region. Mr. Lauer wished to extend to the Board of Directors for the Oregon Region the heartiest of congratulations on behalf of the entire Board of Regents of the parent organization for accomplishing so great a job. Bill then outlined specific plans for the upcoming Bi-Centennial National Tour and promised to send to the Far West members a personally vamped "Travel Design" that will assist in the trek to San Antonio plus reveal how attractive a tour it will be.



Dutch Darrin then rose to the occasion by thanking all the people and all the clubs for remembering him and his work. He followed this up by presenting to Packards International the original drawings of his famous Packard Darrin designs. Original brochures of the Darrin were then autographed personally by Dutch for the members present. He further fielded questions from the floor. Dutch was marvelous, as usual!



The autographed original brochures were presented by Dutch himself.

This year's meet was great! The entire event ended with, "See you in Texas this summer". This is a must on everyone's calendar. The coming National Tour will be the biggest and the most prestigious event in the history of Packards International. Plan to be there!

SPRING 1976

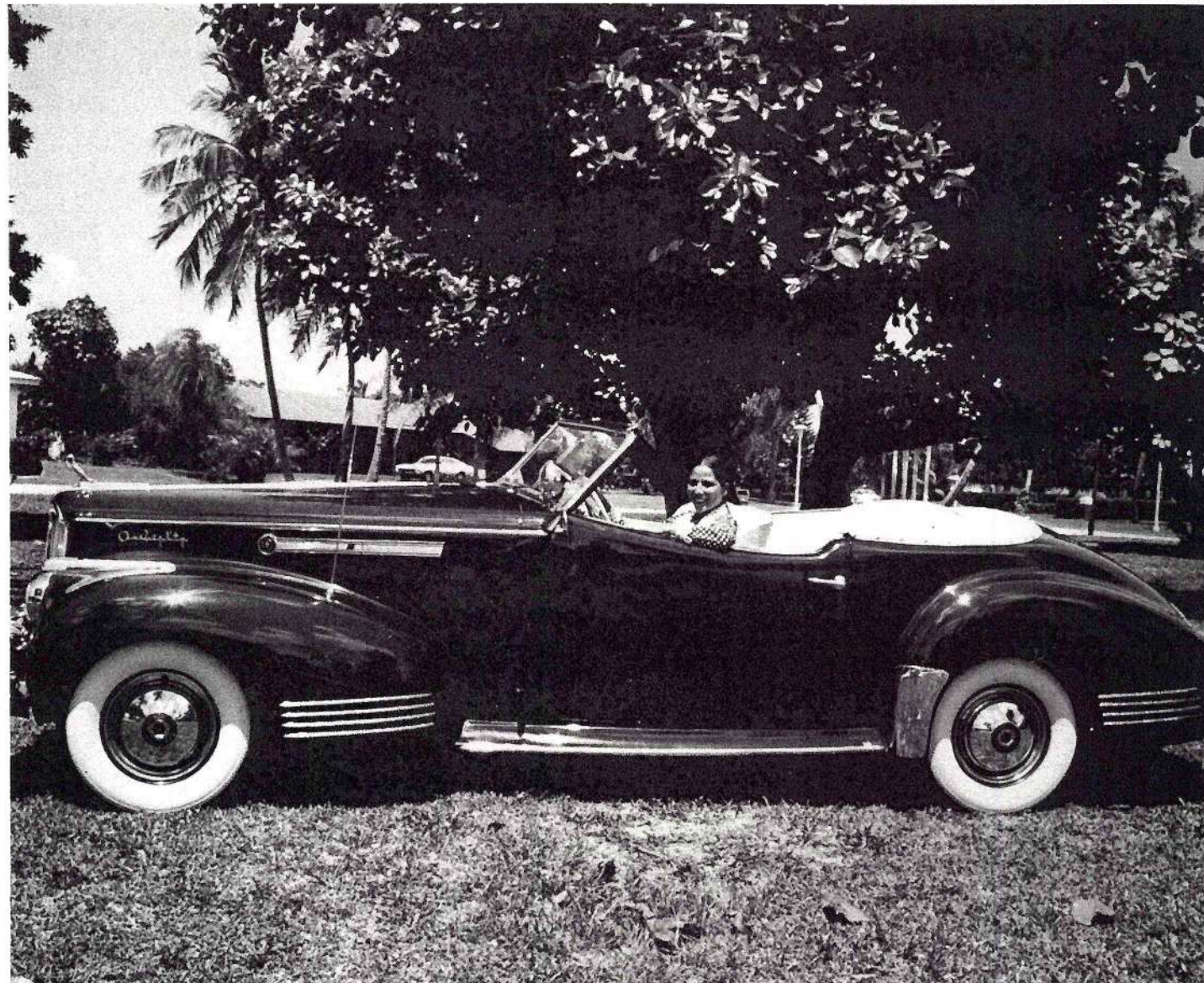
MY WIFE LUISITA SEVILLA
"Two elegant models"

My wife is a famous Flamenco dancer who has appeared all over the world and in many T.V. commercials. Now retired she teaches Flamenco in Miami and only appears in Concert once a year. This year her concert was given with Jose Molina as Guest Star.



S

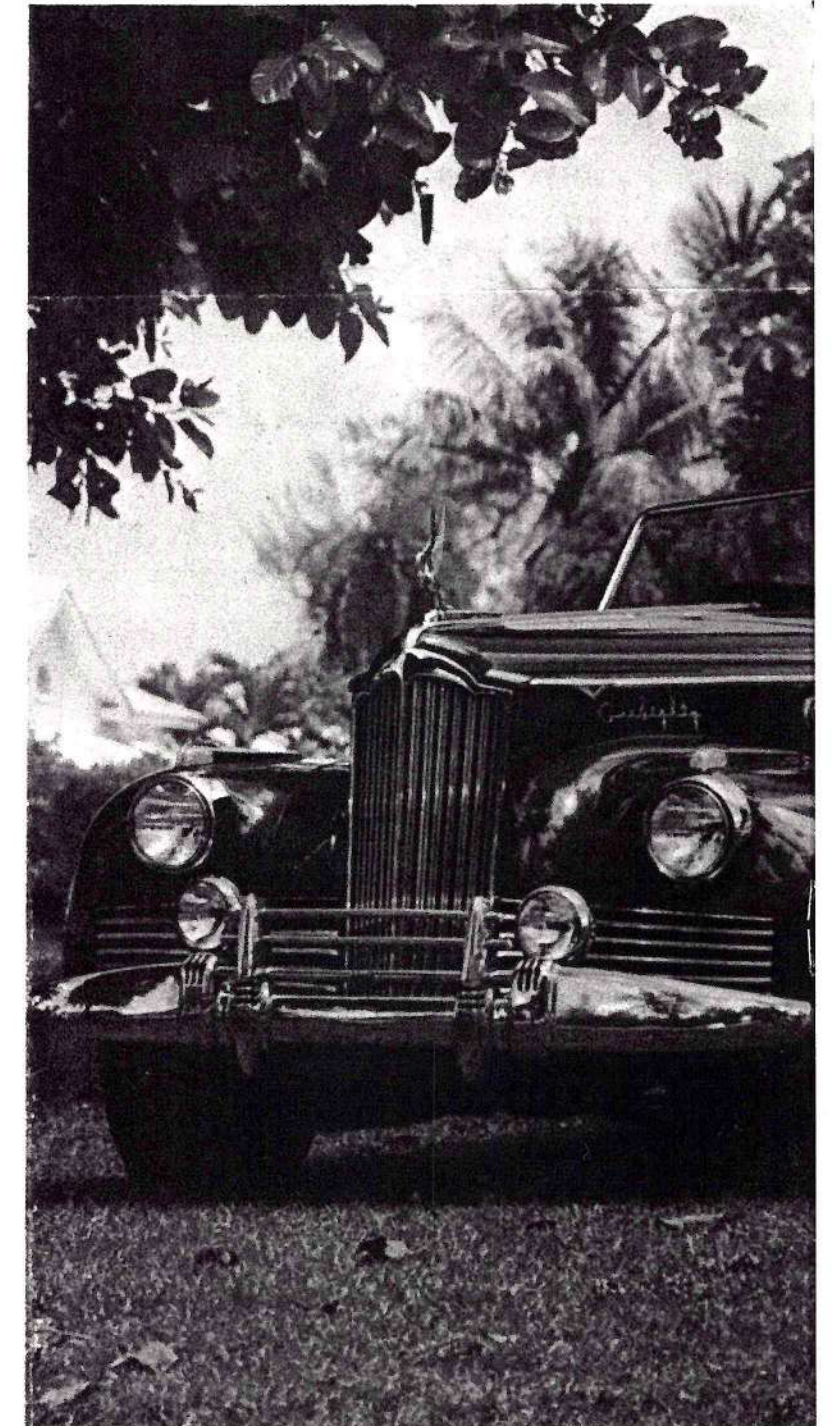
1942 D



Dear Sir:

Some time ago (approximately six months) I sent you a perfectly great large photo of a recently acquired Packard Darrin 1942, along with a story of the Darrin, and Darrins in general. The response was to ask for detailing photos which were taken, but proved totally inadequate due to the inherent lack of photographer (in this case, me).

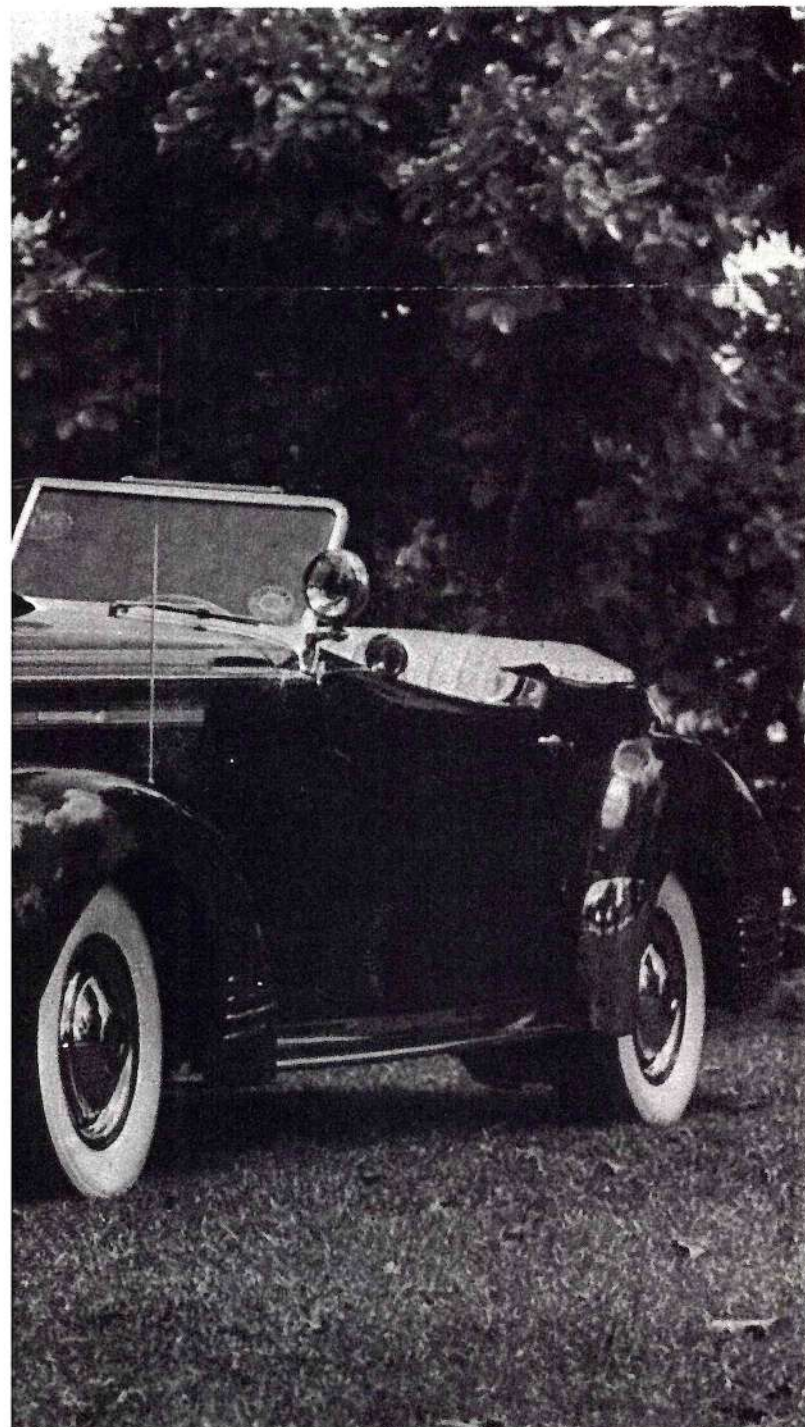
I am involved in International Boxing as the Doctor for various fighters in the Angelo Dundee stable (we have developed eight Champions) including, and particularly, Muhammed Ali, a.k.a Cassius Clay, and for the past year have travelled more than I care to think about working in the various Championship bouts from Africa to Mexico, to France, to Malaysia, to South Africa, to Rio, to England, and all over the United States. Add to this writing various articles on boxing and medicine, and a family of four children, and the ever pressing demands of the Antique Car hobby, and you have an idea of why I am so late in following up this assignment of love.



alon



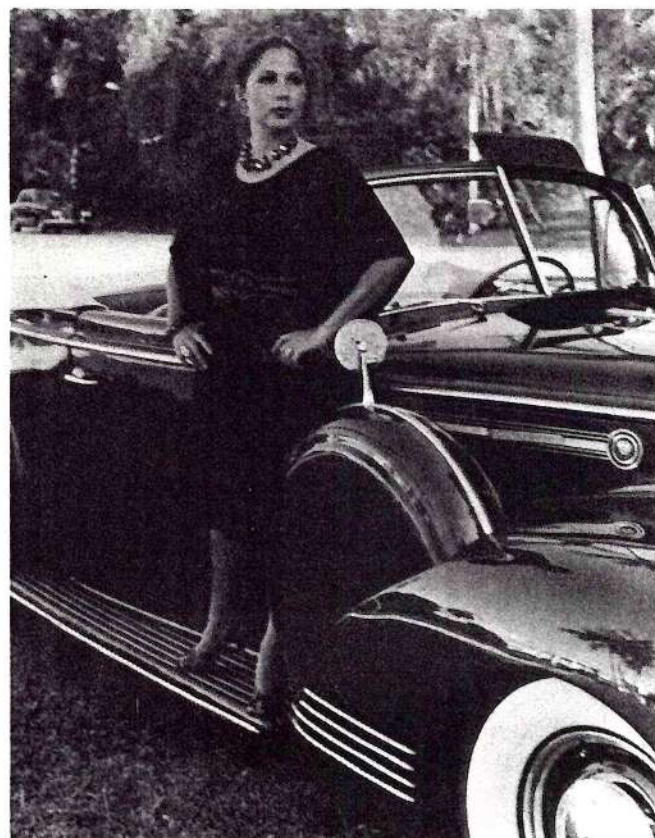
DARRIN "180"



Some things work out for the best however, and in this case, as you peruse the enclosed material I think you will agree. In the interim my car restorer, a talented Packard freak, Darryl Gaulden, finished restoring a basket case 1941 Packard "160" Convertible, with side mounts, which started out to be a maroon car but ended up the same color as the Darrin, but not intentionally. My wife, who is a well known Flamenco dancer (and now a teacher in her own studio) has a friend who is a talented dress designer, and preparing a Fall line of clothes, decided to have a fashion show. I narrated (another FIRST) and took the girls to the show in the Darrin, which caused as much of a stir as the show, and thereby hangs the tale. We decided to fix her brochure for the Fall by photographing the girls in the Darrin and 160, as well as a Model A Roadster and a 1947 Cadillac Convertible that are also in my collection.

The photographer turned out to be a car freak also, and volunteered to detail the two Packards, as you can see. The girls came out so nicely that I thought they might make a nice addition to the cover, or at least the story. I find the young people are as interested in these old cars as us old fogies, if not more so. In addition to the detailed photos, I enclose some copies of sketches I made of the 160 in all stages of repair and restoration. It occurred to

These photos taken for a pic lay-out for a fashion designer's line of clothes using the Packards as the main props.



FALL 1975

me, as an old commercial artist, that I have never seen line drawing of these cars in your book, and it might start other artists (more talented hopefully) to sketching more than just portraits of cars (photos are better).

In all the time I was hunting the elusive Darrin, I did not run across any detailed information about them. No good photographic layout. No comparisons with the production models. I hope to send you some detailed pictures of a well restored 1939 and 1940 Darrin, as well as a four door Darrin, 1940, in the final stages of restoration. I am serious in saying that I think your magazine would (should) do a history of Darrins, as well illustrated as possible. Certainly they are the most photographic of the later Packards, and the most glamorous, and deserve a good definitive treatment for future buyers and historians. In the Miami area we have two excellent 1940 Darrins, one 1939, one 1940 four door and my 1942 Darrin. We have one Jerry built, ridiculous imitation with the Landau top, incorrectly imitated, but I am not counting that mess, although it would bear showing just to prove what extremes disreputable car restorers will go to to dupe the public.

In detailing the cars I wanted to show what the interiors looked like, particularly the dash and seats, since that almost drove us crazy trying to get the interiors correct. Many additional photos should be taken but time and a good photographer are not always available. For example the motor compartment is so inaccessible for light and photography that it would take a good pro with lighting to do the motor well. And pictures of the car with the top up should be included, but in both cases the car looks far better with the top down and boot in place.

To supplement the articles on the Darrin I will try to dash off a quick description of the restoration of the 1941.

Please let me know what you think of the pictures, and if they are usable, and if you think the idea strong enough to dedicate some future issue to the Darling Darrins.

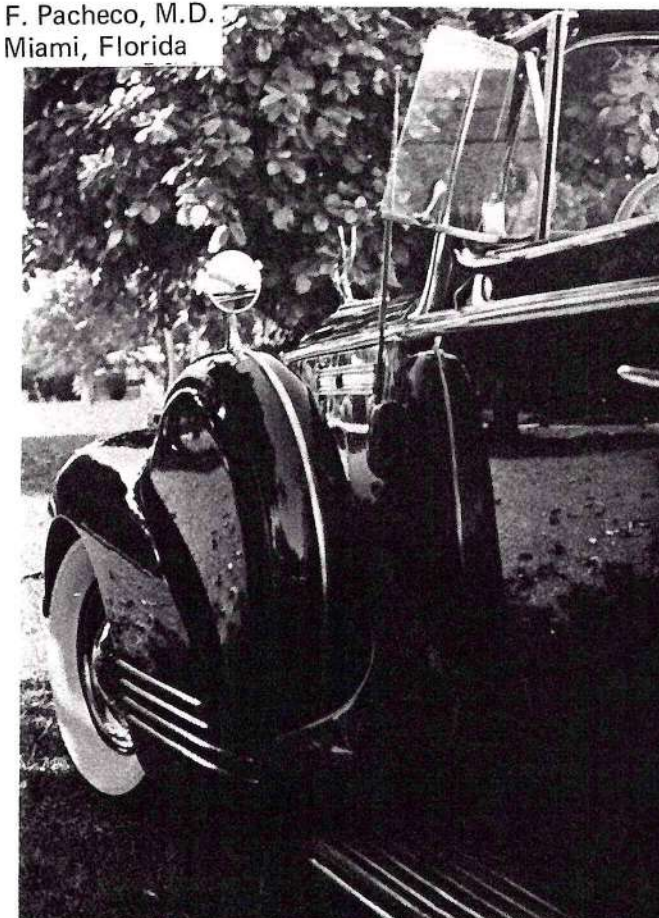
WIFE LUISITA WITH
1941 "160" CONVERTIBLE



I save all Packard International books, and think you should be selling binders for back issues. They are an excellent source of info to all of us fans, and to the genuine restorer. Gaulden is now restoring a 1935 Dietrich 4 door Convertible Super Eight, and your Summer 1974 issue is being used to aid in the restoration.

Again thank you for a great, tasteful, informative magazine.

F. Pacheco, M.D.
Miami, Florida



DETAIL SIDE MOUNT AND MIRROR
1941 "160" PACKARD



DARRIN



REAR — TOP DOWN — WINDOWS UP

RESTORATION OF THE 1940 "160" PACKARD CONVERTIBLE

My car restorer is a Will Rogers type of Georgia Cracker who is absolutely enraptured with anything Packard, and consequently, is the last word in anything pertaining to these beautiful cars. He owns the John Jacob Astor 1934 Limo which was used by the Germans as a Staff Car in World War II, and bought by Mr. Gaulden at a right price off his estate in the days before people were aware of the value of twelve cylinder luxury Packards. He was responsible for my interest in the antique car hobby by fixing up a Model A Ford Roadster I had purchased out of Hemmings, sight unseen, and in need of minor repairs.

While in his garage I fell for a 1947 Cadillac convertible that was original and mint under a layer of dirt, and he sold that to me at a right price, but telling me that the BEST BUY in his garage was a

basket case sitting in the back, unnoticed and unappreciated by all but the most knowledgeable. I nodded at the bucket of bolts and couldn't even guess what it was outside of some late thirties Packard. I went on to fix up the Cadillac into a mint car, and began to satisfy a life long desire to own a 1940 Lincoln Continental, against all warnings by all knowledgeable car enthusiasts. Finally in L.A. for the Norton-Ali fight I found a 1940 Lincoln in Santa Monica Classic Cars, and since it was to be a gift from Ali for fixing his broken jaw, I bought it against all admonitions. The car was beautiful but a BOMB, and virtually defied all efforts to nurse it back to health. Gaulden wisely refused to touch it. Eventually it was consigned to the clutches of the Kruse Bros., the Mid-West version of the Pirates of Penzance, and it was sold in the Atlanta Auction. One more brief flirtation with a four door 1934 Auburn Phaeton, and I was ready to take Gaulden at his word and enter the sacrosanct world of Packard.



FRONT VIEW OF 1942 DARRIN

Lower feeling — Vertical
and horizontal grille



FRONT VIEW 1941
Grille different
Trippie lights

1941 "160" CONVERTIBLE

2 FRONT Views



In New York for the Ali Frazier second fight I was taken to Connecticut to look at a Darrin and got hooked. After a few months of looking for other Darrins (including Babachech's Darrin), I listened to the common sense part of my addled brain and paid top dollar for the best, a 1942 Darrin formerly belonging to President Avila Camacho in Mexico. I have never regretted this, and it inspired me to buy the hulk in Darryl's garage with the proviso that he do all the restoring, for he is the BEST, and he does it ALL. We had been buying missing parts here and there as Darryl went to Hershey, Reno and hither and thither.

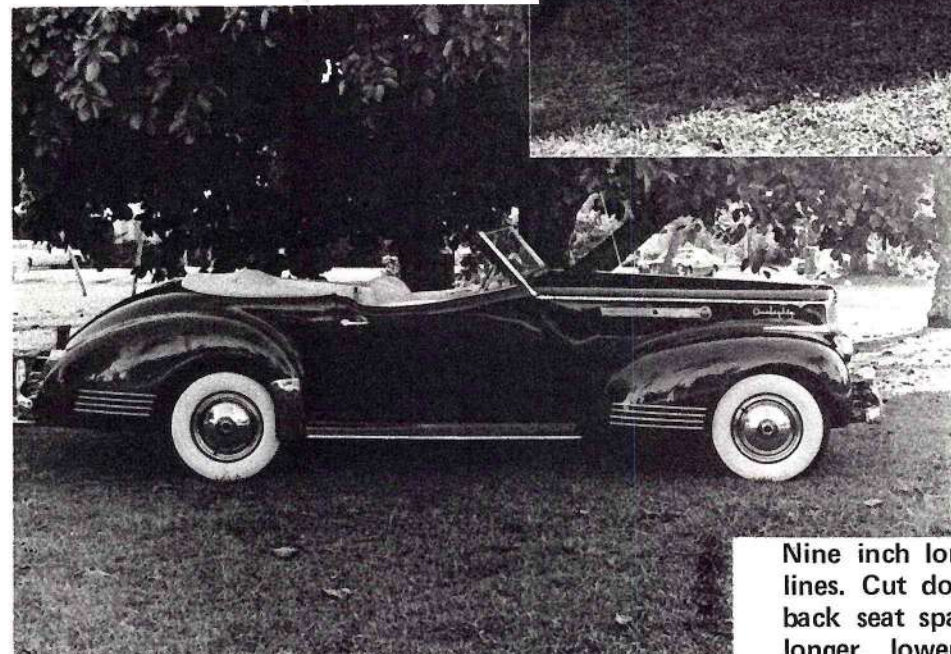
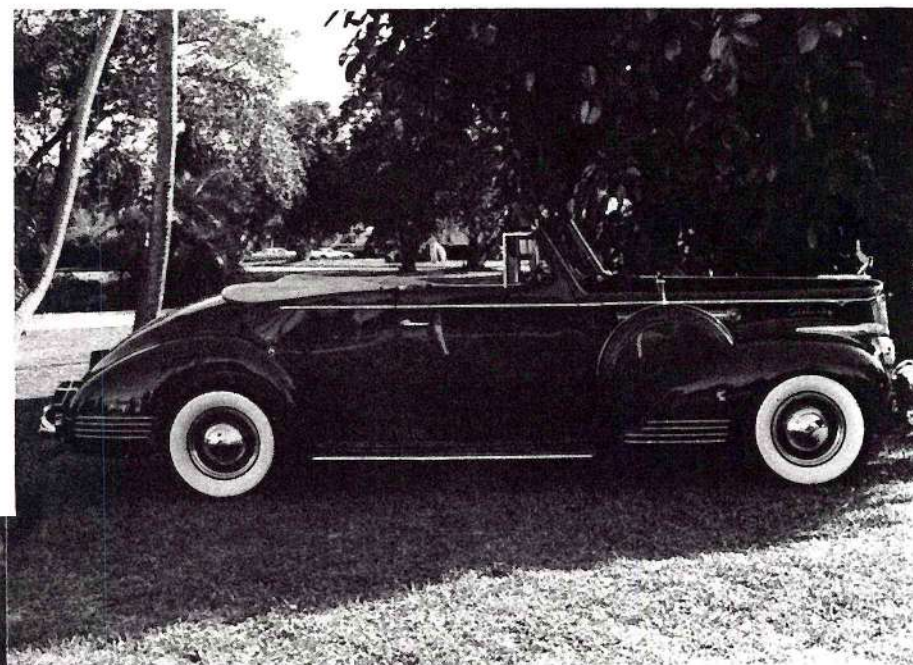
As we got into the real restoration we found the block was cracked and the left front fender was un-useable, so we found a hearse in Houston (that sounds like a title for a short story) with a great engine and a great left front fender, welded. The tire covers we got from Hershey. The mirrors out of Hemmings, as well as the total rewiring. A wheel was sent to me from Houston area by a doctor for \$85.00 but it was a deluxe, like on the Darrin, and worth every cent. The plastic was a warped mess but Darryl

37 with his incredible patience and a lot of epoxy and moxie put it together. The doctor in Houston sent me to a guy in Carolina for a 1941 radio for \$135.00 but when it came it turned out to be for a Clipper, and therefore, upside down. I returned it and Darryl traded a friend a part from my Caddy that we had left over for a great '41 radio, for \$10.00. Incredible. The seats were barely together, but a genius of an upholsterer who loves old cars redid them in excellent leather. We had to get the 1941 new car brochure to get the details of the seats and the top with its small red piping that adds so much to the looks. The final roadblock was the tail light lenses which were not to be found for any price. We ordered repros from a guy in New England, who has, as of this date, neither sent the repros or returned the money. I am considering mustering the Minutemen and sending them for my \$85.00. At a show in Reno, Darryl finally found some originals for (gulp) \$200.00, and my car was finished. You can only compare it to the Darrin by the enclosed photos, but, take my word for it, many people prefer it to the Darrin for looks. P.S. It also drives like a dream.

1941 "160" PACKARD

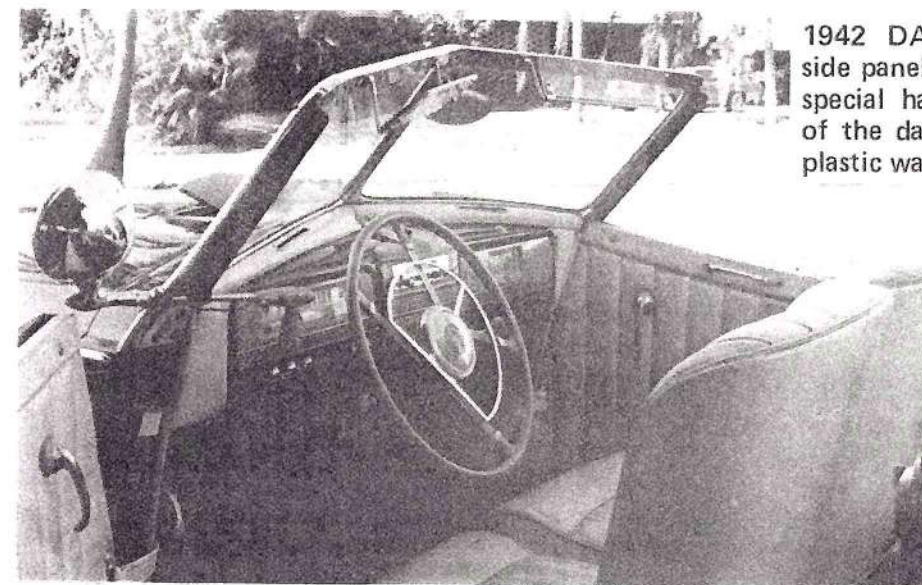
WITH SIDEMOUNTS

Shorter —
Stubbier.



1942 DARRIN —

Nine inch longer hood, no sidemounts to break up lines. Cut down windshield, cut down doors, larger back seat space, flush top and boot, smaller trunk, longer, lower, faster, racier, and more expensive.

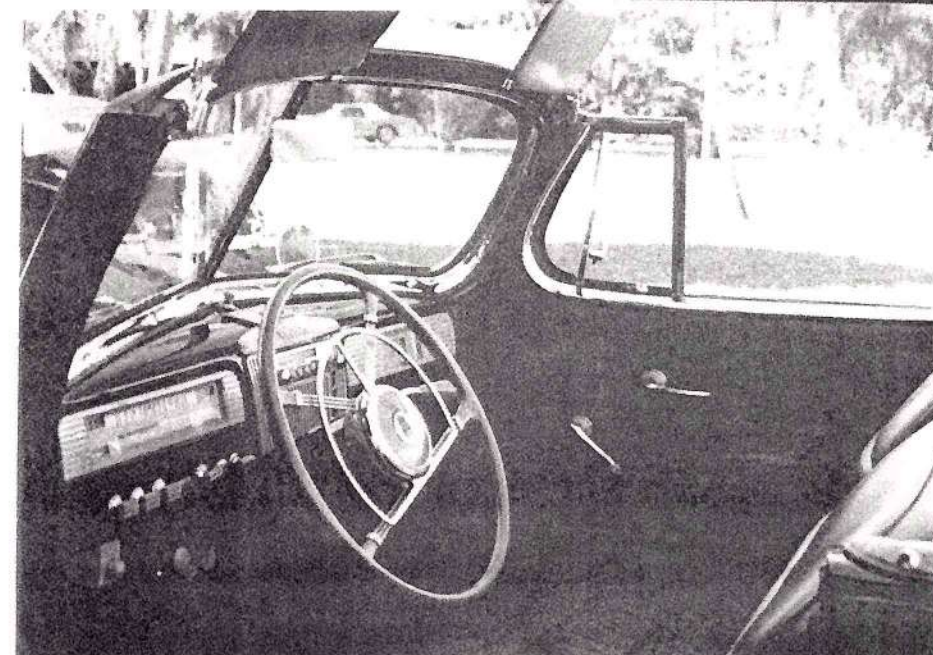
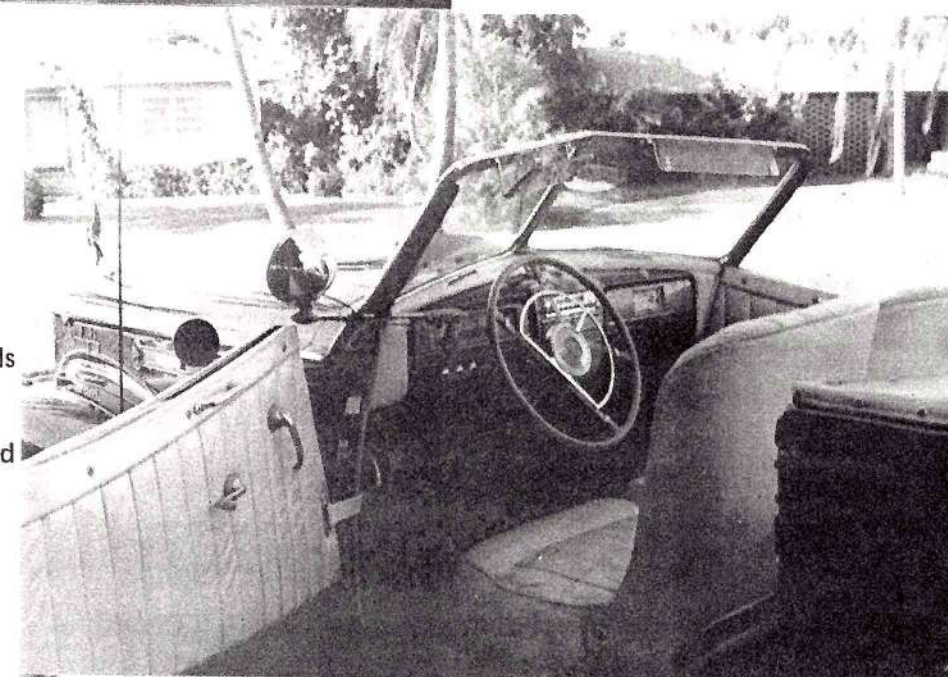


1942 DARRIN — Deluxe wheel, vertical pleated side panel and bucket seats. Cut down door required special handle (top) and leather strap hinge. Color of the dash was the same color as the car but under plastic was wood panel effect.

Note: Special Windshield
No Side Vents
Small plastic (blue),
See-thru Sun Visor

1942 DARRIN

Nine inch longer hood.
'42 Darrin - Bucket Seats
White Leather
View of leather strap that holds
cut down door.
Crimson Rug
White Leather trim on dash and
Windshield



1941 "160" CONVERTIBLE

Bench Seat
Tan Leather
Full Chrome Frame on
Windshield

Production Windshield
Wind-Vents Standard
Arm Rest, Small
Leather Sun Visor
Large

1941 PRODUCTION —
Dash same color as car
Deluxe Wheel
Cream plastic: tough to restore
Tan leather - horizontal pleats



REAR VIEW DARRIN – 1942

DARRIN HAS: flush folding special top and boot hinges, outside, on rear lid.

PRODUCTION “160” does not fold as smoothly, consequently has 2 pointed protuberances. Rear trunk lid has inside hinges.

But both are very similar from REAR.

NOTE: ‘41 has rear fender welts,
‘42 Darrin has eliminated welts.

REAR VIEW “160” – Production 1941



SIDE MOUNT “DETAIL”

How to get heart failure: Model decided to pose atop newly restored hood while I was off doing something else!

Was it worth it? Nothing happened to hood.

Some favor this hood ornament over cormorant –
What do you think?

Model Sandra Maler.



DARRIN ‘42 ‘41 “160” CONVERTIBLE

PROFILE OF BOTH CARS SHOWING
LONGER HOOD OF DARRIN

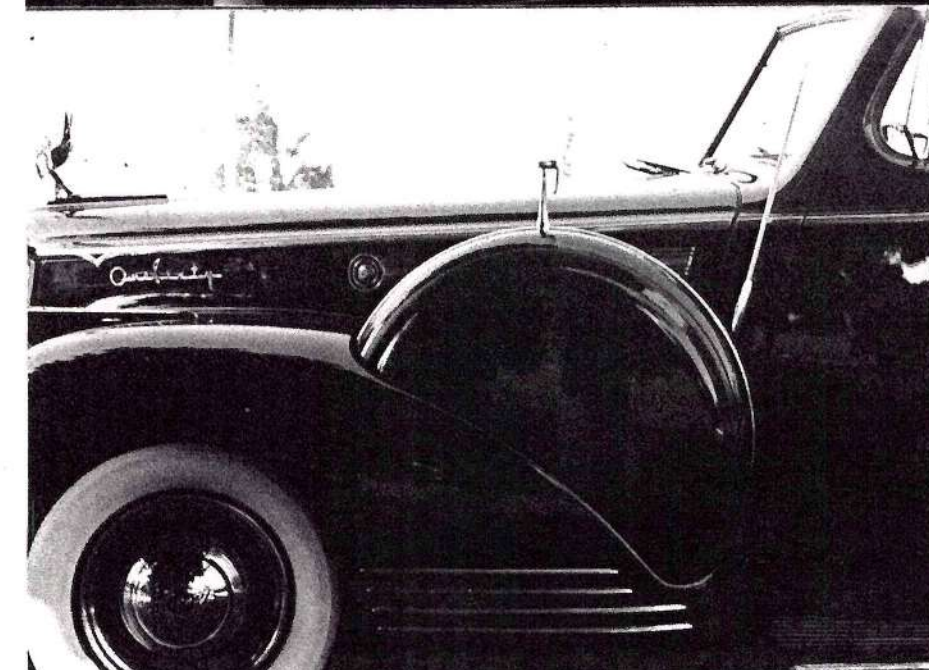
1942 DARRIN

Nine inch longer hood.
Enamel Hood Latch
Enamel Hubcap
Special Windshield
Smaller, swept back
Racy look

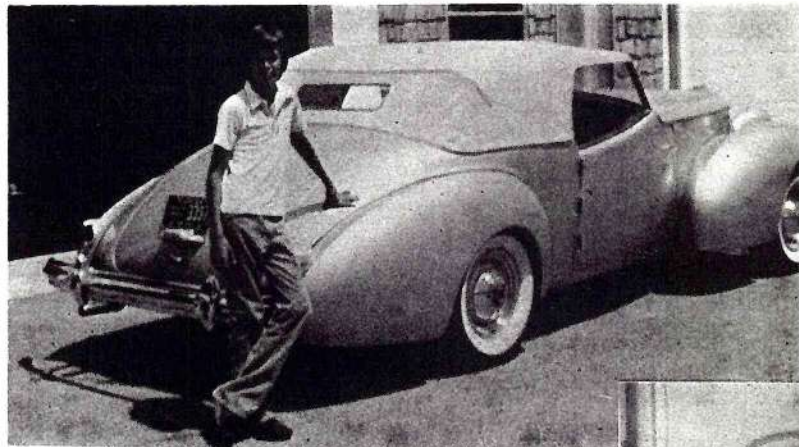


1941 “160” CONVERTIBLE

Longer fender to accom-
date side mount with mirror.
Aerial on body
Plain Hubcaps
Plain Hood Latch



FENDER AND HOOD DETAIL



Son Ferdie, an old car enthusiast,
with 1940 Darrin, 2 door, restored
by Coachcraft of Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.

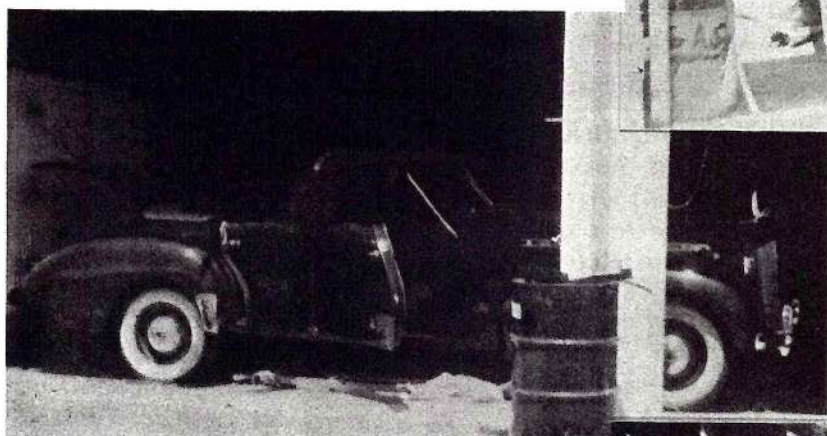


1942 DARRIN – FRONT COCKPIT

Ample leg room in front cockpit,
amply demonstrated by leggy model
Sandra Maler.

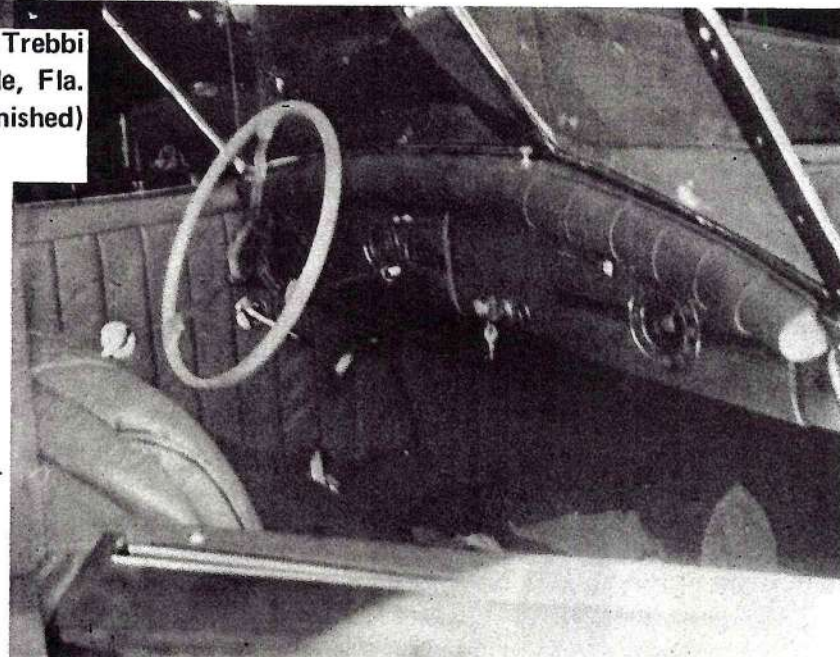
Bucket seats held up better than
the photographer.

Is this what Darrin had in mind?



2 DARRINS are being restored by George Trebbi
and Chip Green at Coachcraft, Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.
Both cars are out of Mexico, one a 2 door (finished)
one a 4 door Phaeton.

1940 DARRIN FOUR DOOR –
UNDER RESTORATION



1942 DARRIN – FRONT COCKPIT

Ample leg room in front cockpit,
amply demonstrated by leggy model
Sandra Maler.

Bucket seats held up better than
the photographer.

Is this what Darrin had in mind?



1940 PACKARD "160" with top up.
Some like it better than with top
down.



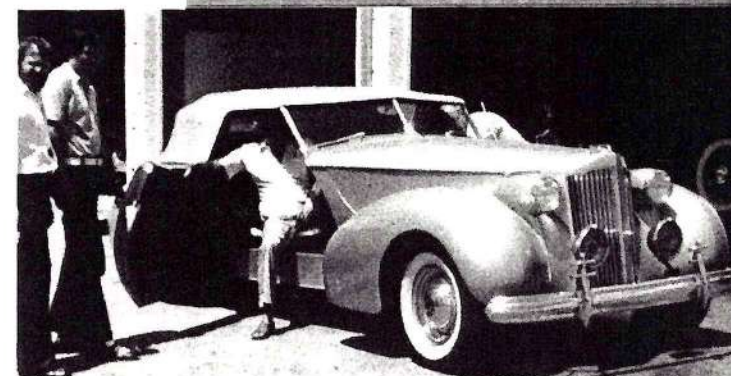
DARRIN – 2 DOOR
COMPARED TO
1941 "160" CONVERTIBLE
– FRONTAL –



1940 DARRIN – Rear View
Silver and Red Leather Interior

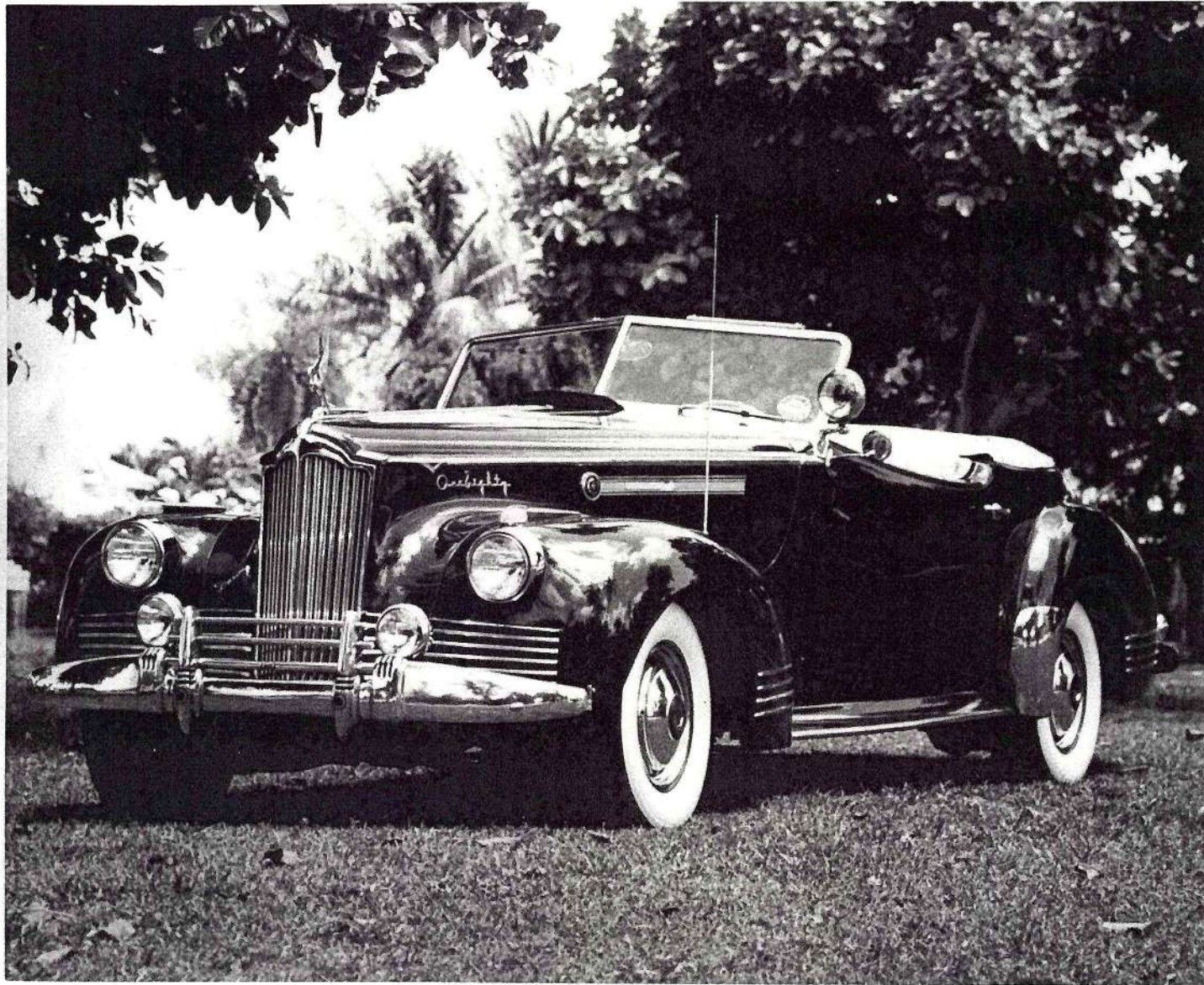
Rear comparison with my
1941 "160" Convertible

1940 DARRIN – Doctor Pacheco
in car; Chip Green, restorer from
Coachcraft, and Dr. Howard Gordon,
Plastic Surgeon (w/beard) who is
restoring '35 Dietrich 4 door Conv.
Sedan.



DARRIN TALKS ABOUT DARRIN

In this exclusive interview with Editor-In-Chief Frank Taylor, Howard "Dutch" Darrin one of the world's foremost automobile designers talks about himself and career as one of the most successful Packard stylists of all time.



Darrin's automobile career started as a very young man in New York where he was a frequent guest at debutante balls, minus a hat and coat if he didn't have 10c for the check girl, or with them if he was flush. Since the parties were held in the wintertime, it was sometimes at the risk of good health one went to these glittering social affairs sans outer clothing!

It was at one of these affairs that he made his first contact with the automobile industry. "The daughter of Martin B. Kelly was there," Darrin recalled, "and I met her father. Kelly was the agent for Willys-Overland advertising and close to the founder of the company.

"Miss Kelly told her dad, 'I just met the big engineer from the Westinghouse Company.' The 'big engineer' was me, a 17-year-old assistant sales engineer! Nevertheless, Kelly passed that information on to John Willys and the first thing I knew, I received a notice there was a Willys Overland waiting for me at the freight yard and a letter from Willys saying: 'I would like to have you install electric gear shifts!'

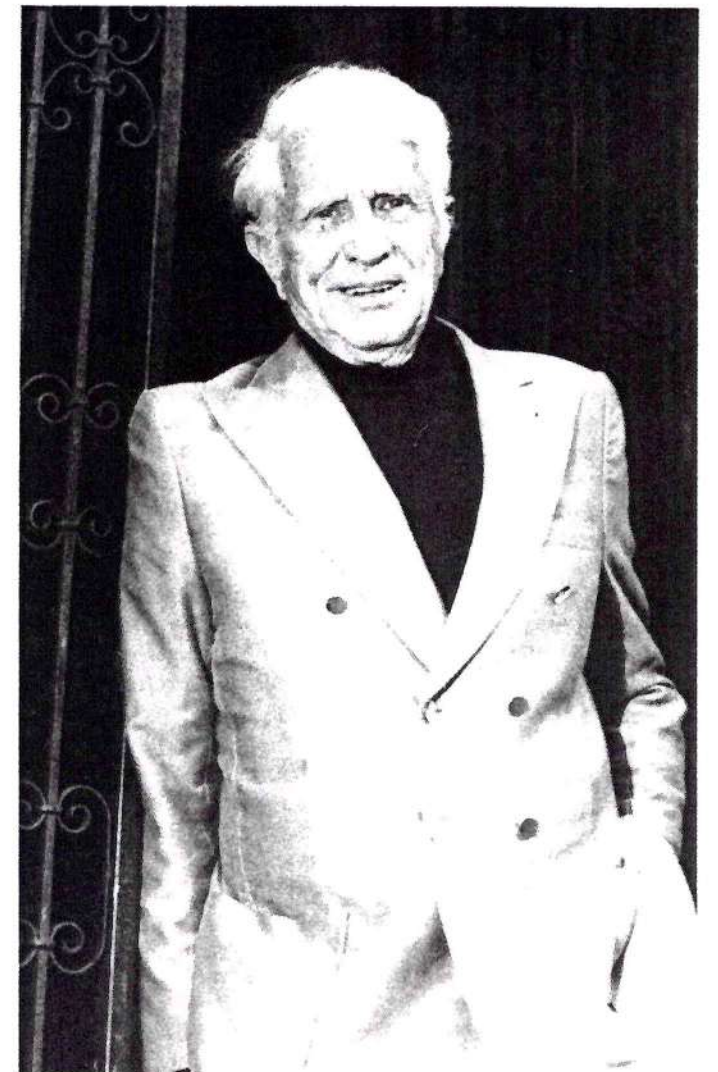
"Willys felt that with an electric gear shift he would be able to double his sales. In those days Willys-Overland was selling nearly 1,500 cars per day, but most of their customers were coming off of Model T Fords which didn't have gear shift levers. The Ford transmission was virtually automatic since everything was operated by foot pedals. The operator didn't have to syncromesh transmission gears, which could be a tough job on those early automobiles.

"When I got the car, I didn't know how to shift a manual transmission myself! On top of that, I am expected to put an electric shift mechanism on it—something that hadn't been done up to that time. But I wasn't about to let a brand new Willys-Overland get away. I decided to put an electric shift on the car somehow.

"So I worked on it and developed a system that could be used today, and was later on, for curtain raisers in theatres. It was a very simple thing, taking no power from the engine like

EDITOR'S NOTE:

During the preparation of this feature, Darrin was tireless in his efforts to provide access to his personal archives, and very generous with his time. For this, the author is extremely grateful. Darrin is now almost finished with a Rolls Royce costing \$78,000—a new hallmark of his designers pen.



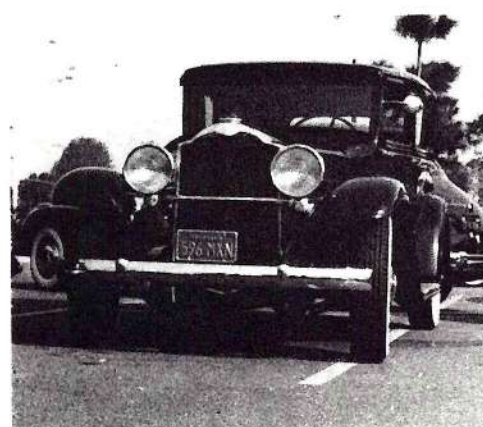
FAMOUS DESIGNER—Darrin at age 78 is full of life and plans for his future automobile designs and career—which now seems to be ready to blossom into full flower again.



DUTCH DARRIN BACK AT THE WHEEL OF ONE OF HIS MODELS
MR. DARRIN AND NEW P. I. PRESIDENT, JERRY KILL
AT JERRY'S BEST OF SHOW
1931 LIMOUSINE



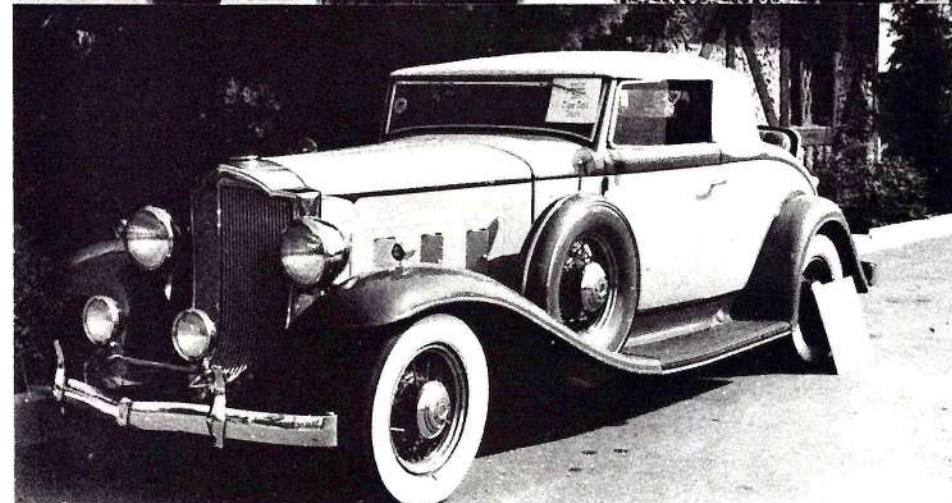
FRED'S BEST OF SHOW 1940 "180"
LIMOUSINE WAITS PATIENTLY



EARL NELSON'S 1932 "901"
TOURING SEDAN



DR. WM. KOTT'S FABULOUS
1951 CONVERTIBLE COUPE



SPRING 1977



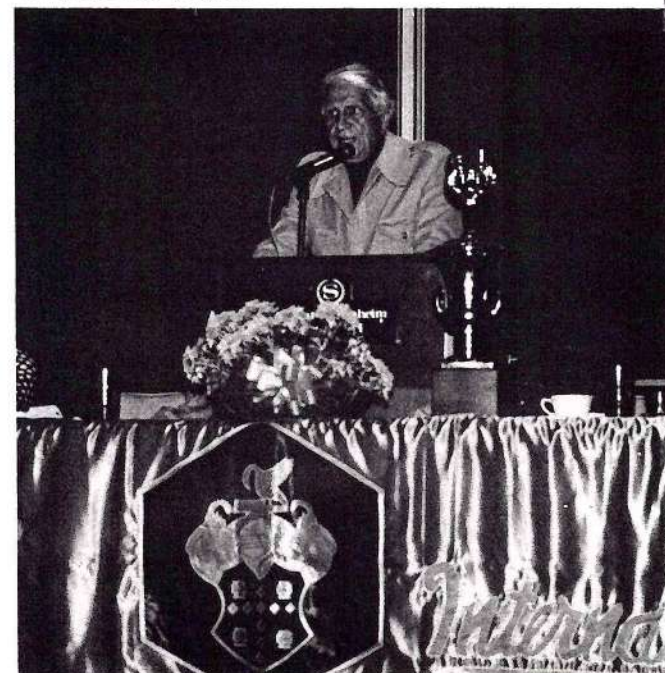
JERRY KILL PRESENTED AN HONORARY PLAQUE TO FRED
MAUCK FOR OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT AS PRESIDENT
OF PACKARDS INTERNATIONAL FOR FOUR YEARS.

Councilman, Dr. William Kott, a P.I. member who presented his fabulous 1951 Convertible in the showcase, introduced the mayor of Anaheim, Mr. W. J. "Bill" Thom. He gave us a rousing welcome from the city, revealed how impressed and grateful he was for our participation in Anaheim and regaled us concerning his love for Packard and how a Ford dealer beat him out of his 1939 Packard!

Mr. Kill followed this by introducing a popular man that really needed no introduction. Our beloved Dutch Darrin, keen, humorous and gregarious as ever, rose to inform us that it wasn't himself that deserved the applause. Rather, he stated that all the members of Packards International actually should get the accolades. With this, he stood up on a chair and gave the entire audience his personal praise!



MAYOR BILL THOM GREETING US TO HIS CITY



"DUTCH" DARRIN AT THE MIKE, GREAT AS EVER!

Out-of-state members were then introduced by Bill Lauer who further pointed out that nine regional directors were in attendance and well over a million dollars worth of Packards were on display at that moment! Harry Champas then reviewed the itinerary for this year's National Tour at Lake Tahoe hosted by his Northern California Region. This was followed by Len Bennett, Regional Director for British Columbia who outlined the plans for the 1978 National Tour to Banff, Alberta and Lake Louise. Mr. Lauer then made the presentation of the Edith R. Soest Memorial Award for the outstanding region for 1976 which was won by our Texas Region. Bill Heil, founding Director for this region proudly accepted the trophy from Bill Terpening of the Oregon Region, winner in 1975.

SPRING 1977

PACKARD'S LAST GREAT CUSTOM MOTOR CARS

By Arthur G. Abrom

The Packard Motor Car Company of Detroit, Michigan had a history of having the greatest number of custom coaches ever assembled on their standard chassis when compared to any other Classic Car of the era. Custom designed bodies were available on Packard chassis almost at the very founding of the company. And through the golden era of coach building (i.e. the 1920's and 1930's) Packard was unmatched in the selections available to the potential customers.

Packard's last great custom motor cars were, of course, the ones designed by Howard Darrin during the late 1930's and early 1940's. These Darrin creations were introduced at a time when the demand for uniquely individualized cars was waning. However, their appearance caused a great stir in automotive circles, and past glories and accomplishments were reborn for a while. Packard, once again, had something that Cadillac, Lincoln, and Rolls-Royce could not match — unequalled style and grace!

Let us digress slightly for a moment and re-view the man responsible for this, Howard Darrin—Mr. Darrin's first adventure into the automotive world occurred in 1916, while he was employed at Westinghouse as an engineer. John North Willys, manufacturing 1500 cars per day, desired a new easy shifting transmission for his product. He contacted Mr. Darrin through a mutual friend. After a short time, Mr. Darrin developed a novel approach to the problem, and Mr. Willys bought the idea.

Several years after the First World War Mr. Darrin began his second venture into the automotive world. He purchased two Dodge chassis and constructed two newly designed bodies. One was sold to Al Jolson, and through the other Howard Darrin met Tom Hibbard. These two gentlemen founded LeBaron, Inc. in 1921. The European manufacturers — Minerva, Hispano, and Isotta — ordered bodies immediately. Success was at hand.

The following year, 1922, Hibbard and Darrin of Paris was formed. Again great success followed quickly . . . Years passed, and in 1931 Tom Hibbard left the firm to join the staff at General Motors. Shortly thereafter the firm of Fernandez and Darrin was born. It too was successful, but the coming of World War II ended this venture.

The foregoing thumbnail sketch was presented here only to acquaint the readers with Mr. Darrin's background. We will expand upon the individual associations in later articles.

Howard Darrin returned to America in 1937 and settled in Hollywood, California at the prodding of Darryl Zanuck. Mr. Darrin's first customer was Percy Morgan. He ordered a special two-seater Ford roadster. Then a famous Packard 120 for Dick Powell — this was the beginning of a great era of "Packarding." It is recorded that Mr. Powell's was the only 1937 Darrin Packard, see our first photograph.

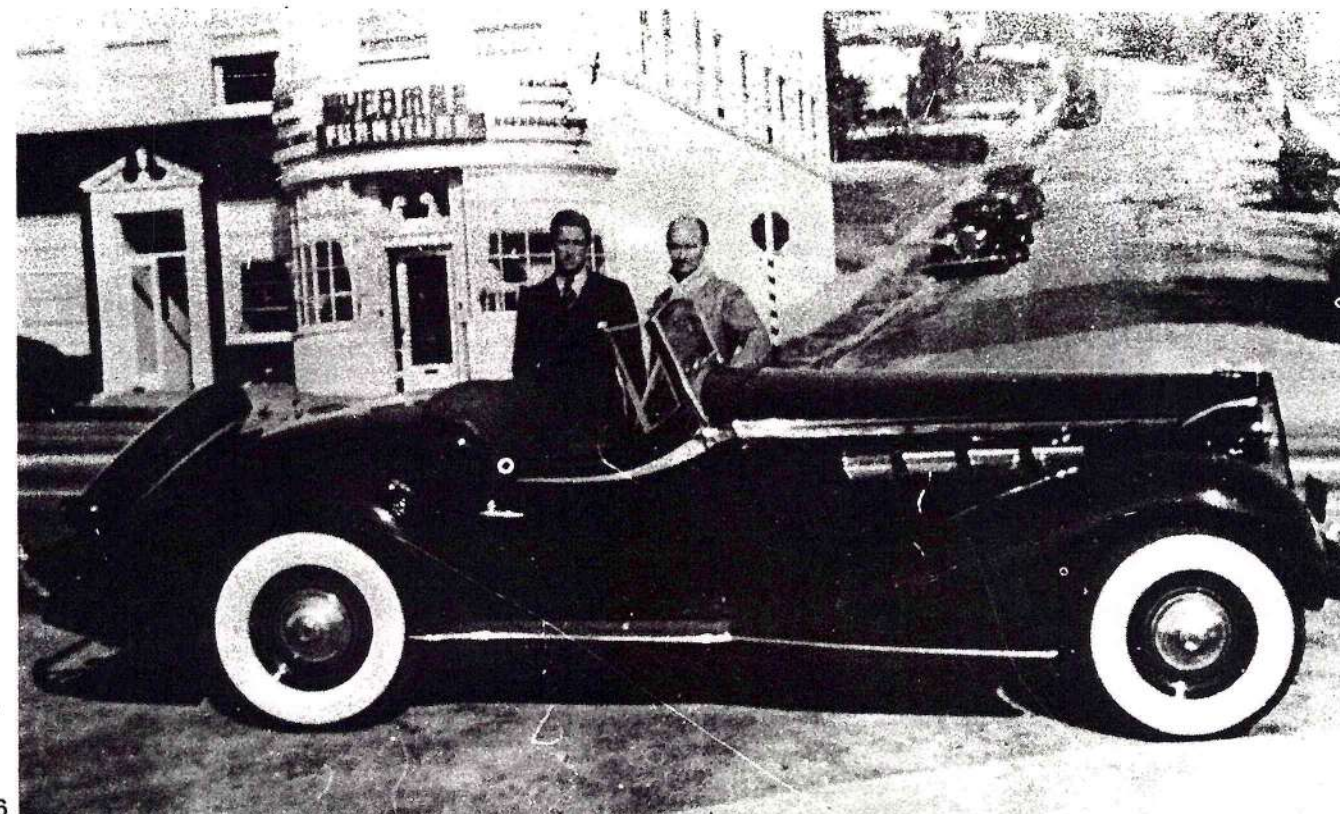
Now let's get down to the Darrin Packards themselves. The 1937 120 version is a highly restyled Packard. The chassis has been shortened, eliminating the rear seats, no rumble seat either! Doors are conventionally hung, but possess the Darrin cut. Windshield is standard with all new vent windows. Trunk space is optimized by an exposed, rear mounted spare. The running boards are still an integrated part of the design concept.

The whereabouts of the particular Packard is unknown.

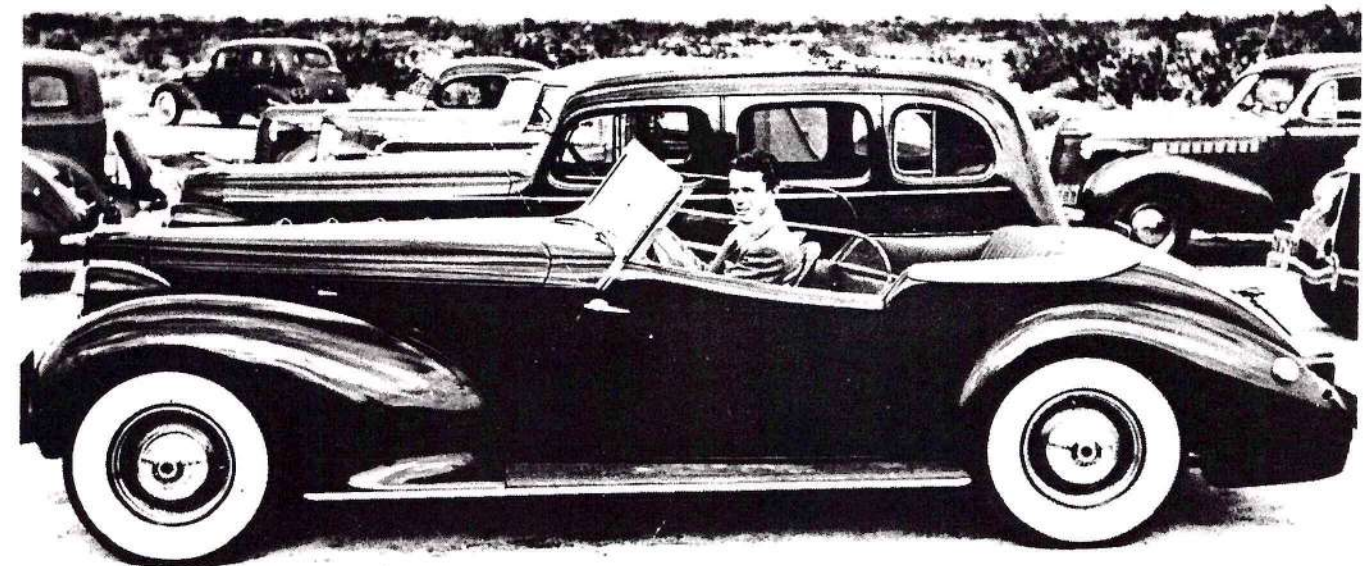
Mr. Darrin's second attempt was on another 120 Packard of 1938 vintage. The one in photograph number 2 is perhaps the first attempt in early 1938. Please note that the running boards are still fully integrated in the car's design. The doors have been rehung to open forward. The standard heavy front seat has been replaced by a thin semi-bucket. The folding top is fully victorian in style. There is an all new, although small, handle on the side of the hood. This became necessary since the standard chrome trim has been eliminated.

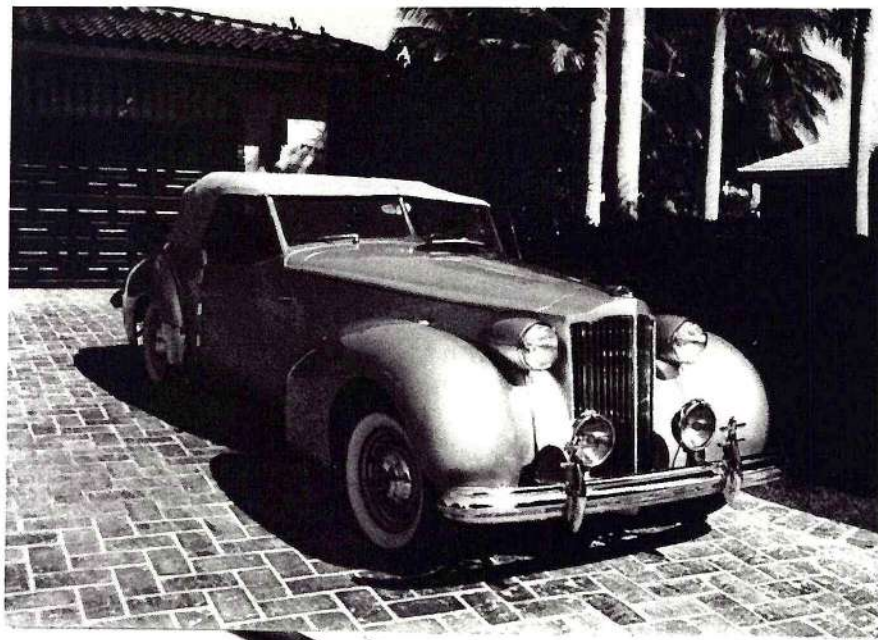
The 1939 Darrin styled Packards were, by far, the most beautiful to date. They represent another styling milestone. First the hood has been extended and given a rakish slope to the rear matching the forward slope of the doors. These are again rear hung on three exposed hinges. Running boards have been entirely eliminated as were the rocker panels. The front fenders have been reshaped, beautifully, due to the eliminated running boards. Again the large stuffed front seat has given way to the individual semi-bucket seats. And, again a new exposed hood latch has been added. Note that all of these Darrin creations have been "channeled" to provide the overall reduction in height.

The first "Packard Darrin" on the 1937 Chassis.



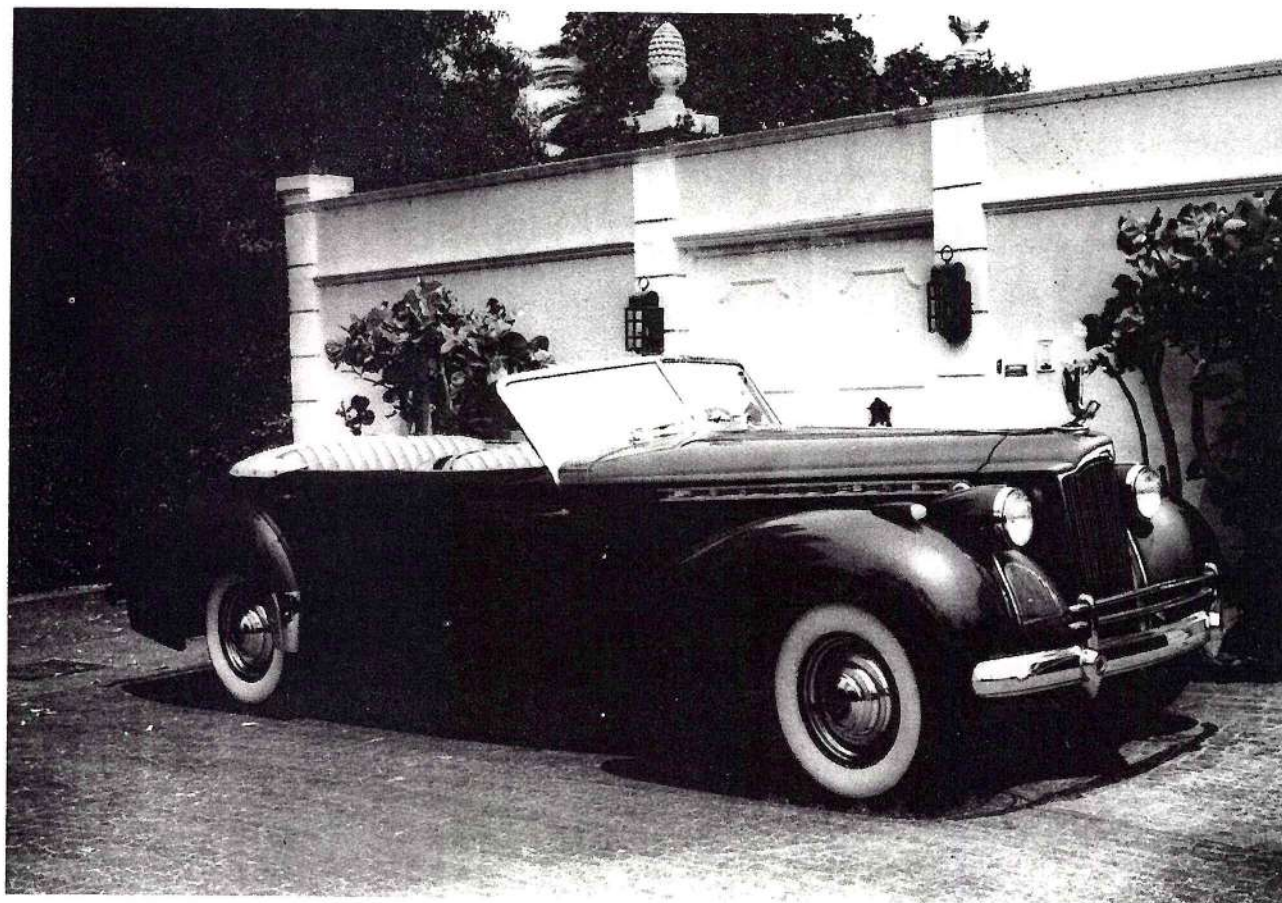
An early version on a 1938 Chassis.



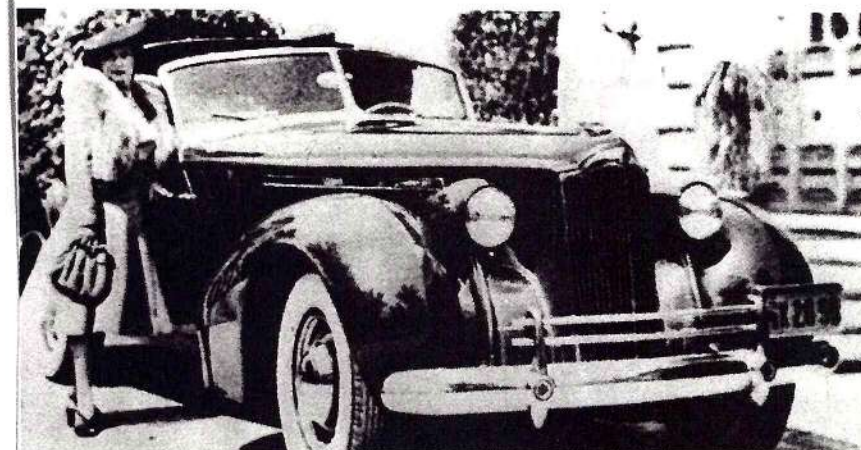
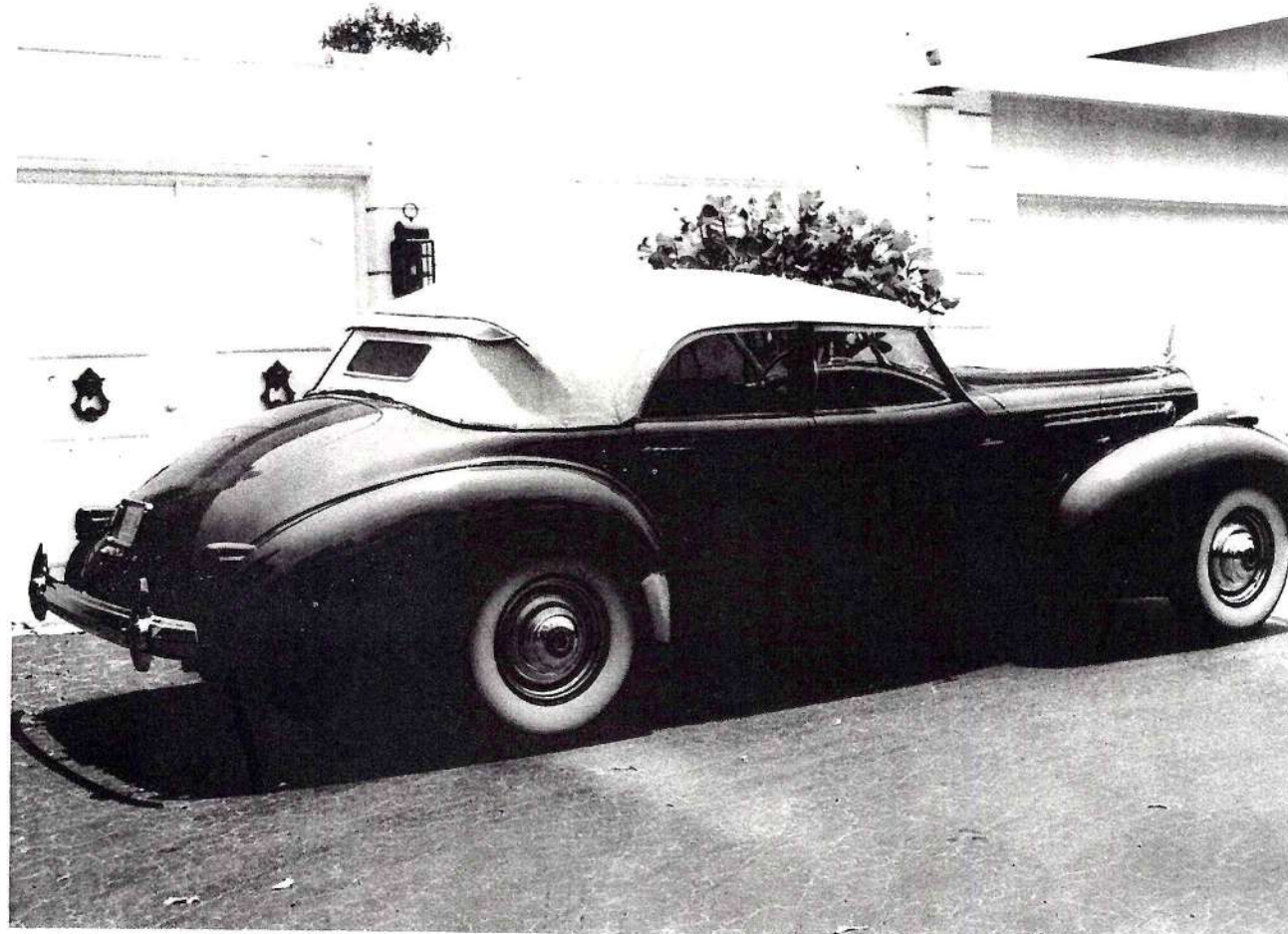


Mr. J. J. Thompson of Florida owns this beautiful 1939 Packard Darrin automobile. These photographs, supplied by Mr. Thompson, clearly indicate the excitement and sex appeal these custom creations generated.





This truly unique Darrin also belongs to Mr. J. J. Thompson of Florida. This Darrin is the most sought after o



THIS PHOTO IS OF POSSIBLY THE ONLY PACKARD DARRIN TOWN CAR OF THIS ERA. ONE WAS BUILT AS PER MR. DARRIN. WHERE IS IT TODAY?

Please note also that these custom Packards are the first to maintain widespread appeal without sidemounts! Some individual custom Packards of the 20's and 30's were styled without sidemounts, but only one at a time. These Darrins were fast becoming a series unto themselves.

The grille bars of the standard factory Packards were alternately painted. Darrin's creations did not continue this theme, for he preferred the all chromed appearance of the '38 models.

The 1940 Darrins were offered in several different models. All of which utilized the suicide front door opening. The Victoria models possessed all of the styling and uniqueness of their previous sisters. The major difference being in front of the cowl. The headlights, aprons, and radiator housing and grille were cut down from the factory standards. Fender mounted parking lights appeared. The hood chrome trim and medallion were added, but the exposed hood latch remains. Again running boards are absent, and the vent windows are gone.

The four door convertible is an enlarged version of the Victoria. One might consider it a stretched Victoria, but it is not. Only seven are reported to have been constructed. These are my personal favorites.

A Sport Sedan, that is a five passenger four door sedan, styled by Darrin was also available and advertised by Packard Motor Car Company. Again, these cars possess all of the styling characteristics of the convertibles. His design has been applied to a sedan, and the results are beautiful.

One, and only one 1940 Darrin Packard Town Car was made. It was sold to the actor Donald Meek for his wife. I personally have only seen one picture of this supposed car (fortunately in my collection), and it is really great . . . Where is it today?

The 1941 Packard Darrins were available in only one model again — the Victoria. The fender mounted chrome strips of the standard Packards

are utilized. A full fender skirt is now used. The cut on the door has been reduced from its formed severity. Doors are now conventionally hung, internal hinged. Now, a long thin chrome strip has been added on the rocker panels, fender to fender. Running boards could be had. I however, have only seen one of these cars.

Personally, I have had the opportunity to drive a 1941 180 Darrin Packard just recently. It was very impressive, and handled well. Sliding behind the wheel is a unique experience in itself. The car was large, but the front compartment gives the distinct feeling of a small sports car. The long pointed hood appears longer when you are seated behind the wheel. The seat, although reconstructed gives the feeling of height and firmness. It is very comfortable and provides the necessary "Packard" feeling. The position of the steering wheel has been altered. This is primarily due to the reconstructed cowl. The wheel has been lowered and feels like it is in your lap. Very easy to get use to and it makes driving a pleasure. Driving one of these custom Packards is an experience that can not be reduced to words. You simply must drive one some day.

The 1942 Packard Darrins are virtually the same as their 1941 counterparts. The difference being the horizontal grille bars on the '42 models. These were the last Darrins offered.

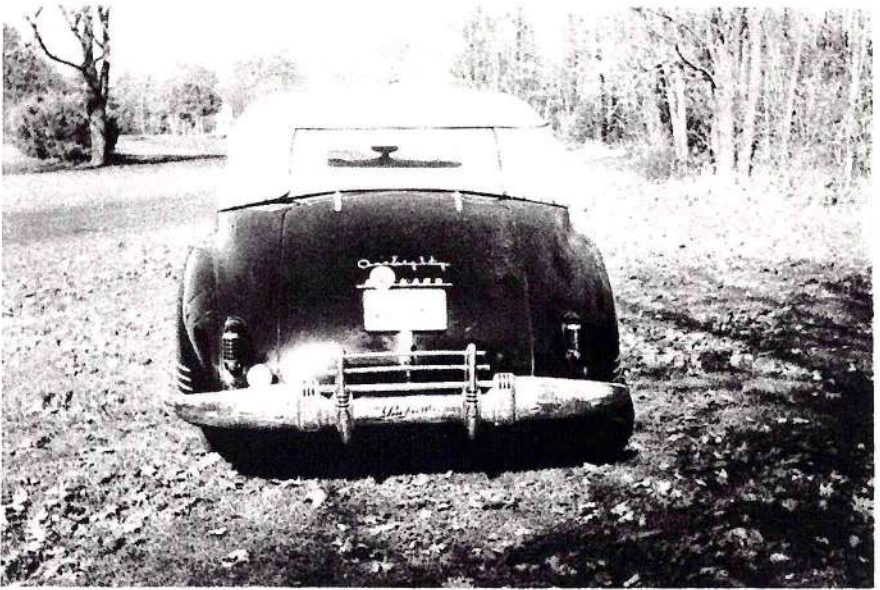
The 1941 and 1942 Darrins appear to have a very heavy roof construction when compared to the 1940 Victorias. This is due to several major differences. First, the rear seat in the 1940 model is full height. The rear seat in the 1941 and '42 Victorias is lower than the factory standard. This allows a lower rear roof contour. But the cross bow in the '40 is therefore heavier (for it has more roof to support). The glass area in the doors of the '41 and '42 Darrins has a much lower rear section. The window drops off quickly. This results in more canvas area, giving a false impression of a "heavy" roof.



THIS RARE 1941 DARRIN "180" WAS RECENTLY PURCHASED AS YOU SEE IT BY MR. ROBERT SKOP. THIS CLASSIC SAT FOR EIGHTEEN YEARS IN AN OLD GARAGE IN SOUTHERN NEW JERSEY ! TRULY A RARE FIND ! MR. SKOP PLANS A COMPLETE RESTORATION.



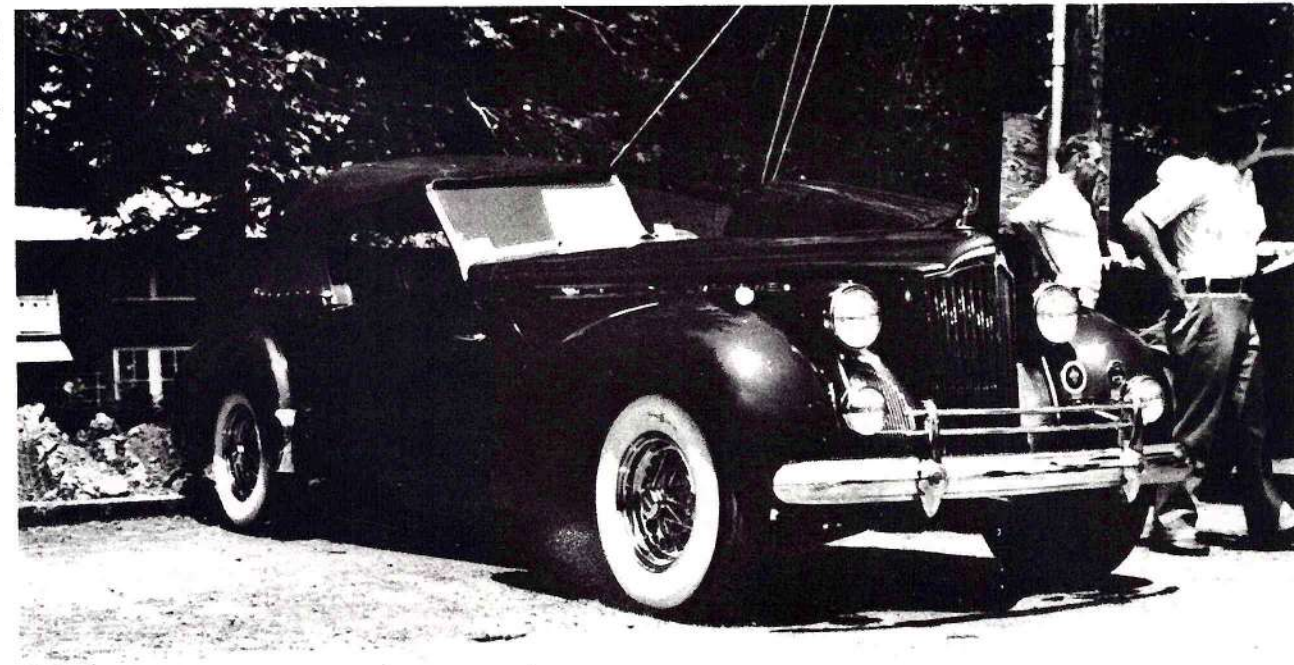
photos by author



photos from the Robert Skop collection

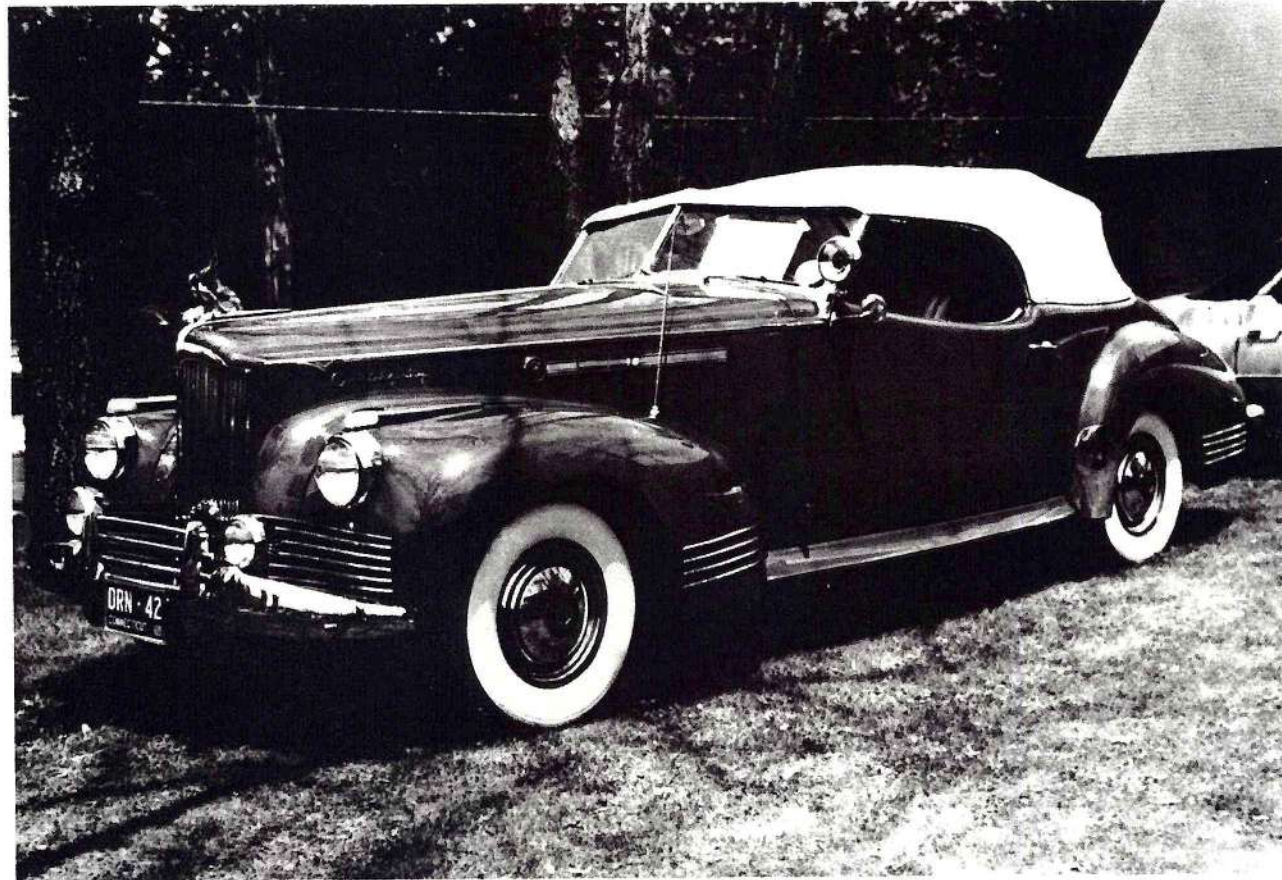


Please note the small differences in these two Darrins. Above, a 120, and below a 180. Bumpers, grille guards, and bumper guards differ. The grille bars on the 120 are stationary, whereas the 180 has thermostatically controlled shutters . . . Hood ornaments differ . . . The 120 has no hood louvers, the 180 has chromed louverstrips. The wire wheels on the 180 are monogrammed Darrin.



The '41 and '42 Darrins give the distinct appearance of a refined factory offering. They are streamlined and all contours flow together harmoniously. Thought, style, design, and engineering all seem to have been applied smoothly into these models. The '40 models possess an entirely different atmosphere. For here we have a distinctive automobile that definitely indicates "customizing". The individual flare is exemplified in the difference in contours — straight lines, curved lines, flat panels and highly contoured panels — all tastefully combined in these Darrins.

Both cars, the 40 and 41/42 Victorias, possess two completely different moods — they project different personalities.



from the Robert Skop photo collection

Howard Darrin's first "American" creations were constructed at Grey Newell's Body Shop in Los Angeles. This was hardly the place to attract the Hollywood crowd he was after. He soon moved his headquarters to Crown Coach Co. and began working on two more Packards and a Rolls-Royce town car for Dorothy di Frasso.

The first of the 1938 Darrins was sold to actor Clark Gable. He really liked the car, but when it rained, Mr. Gable had it back for "alterations" several times.

Soon this shop became too small also, and operations were again moved. This time to Sunset Strip. After moving into the new shop someone accidentally broke the front window. There was no money to replace it... So what to do? Mr. Darrin

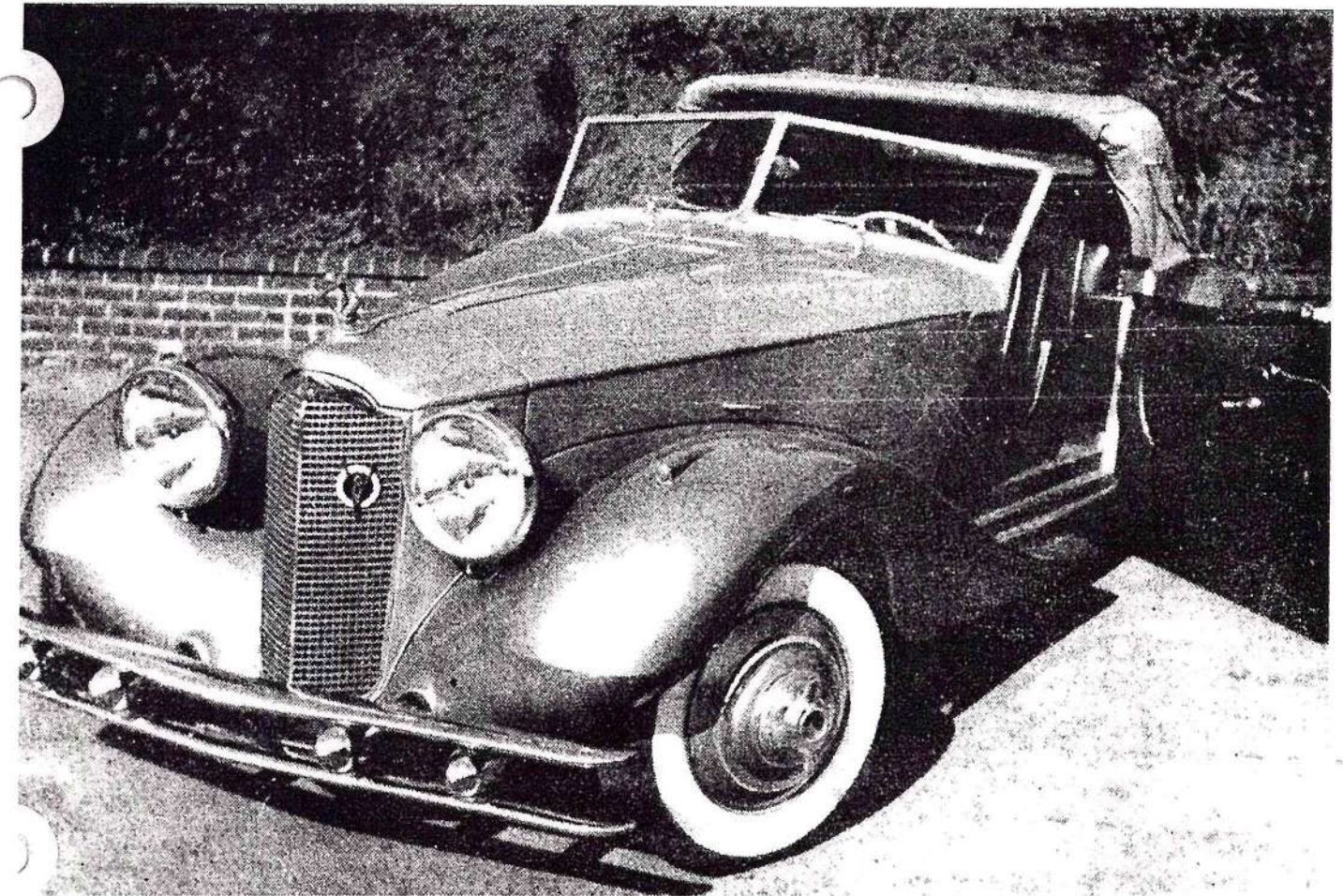
constructed a plywood windowless showcase and placed two Packards in it. The airy display was an absolute success as a crowd pleaser.

The 1938 models were not convertibles to begin with. One naturally feels that these are re-worked convertibles. But these were really too expensive to start with. Darrin bought Packard Eight business coupes that listed for \$1,225. The roofs were cut away and the bodies were channelled three inches. This required new cowls. A Mr. Rudy Stoessel designed and constructed patterns for an all new cowl of aluminum. The rear fenders and deck lid were elevated at the rear for a better appearance. The running boards were left intact on the first three cars.

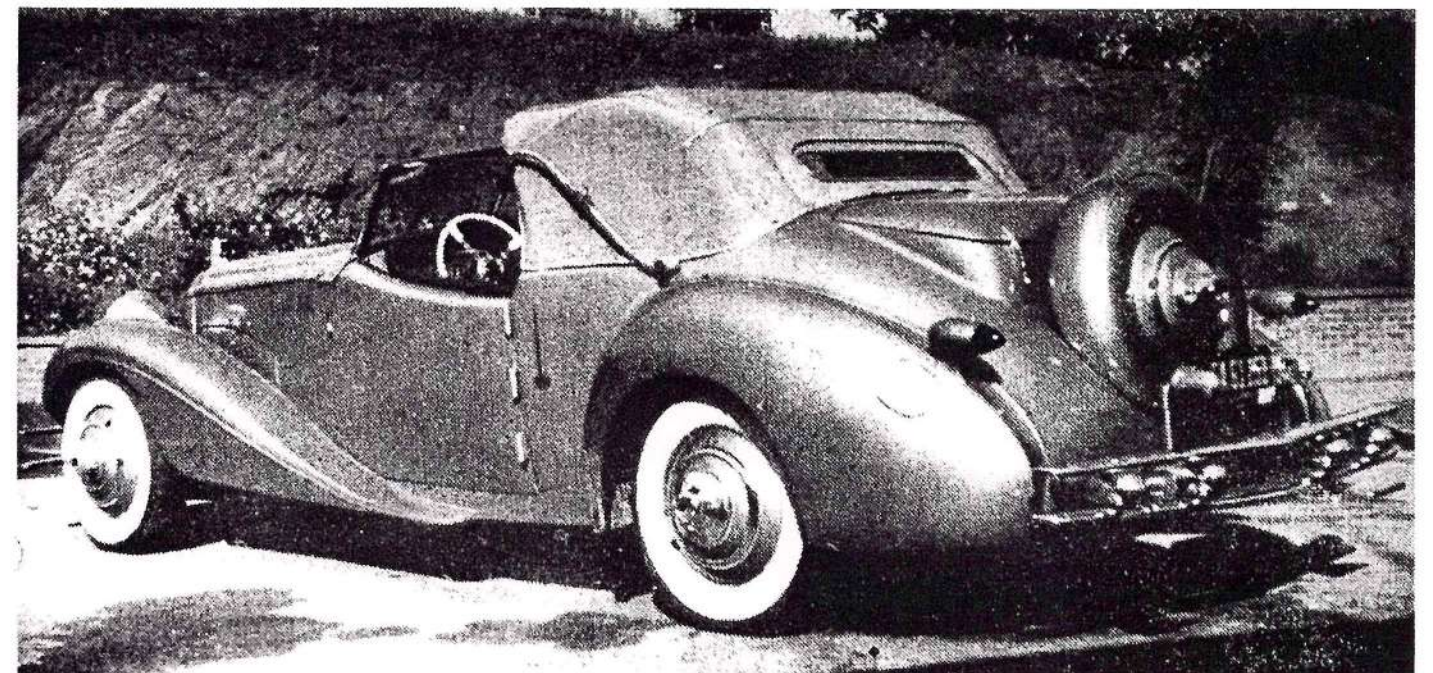
This 1942 Darrin, the last of this breed, is a pleasant blend of Darrin and factory styling. The horizontal and vertical lines of the front end are skillfully blended, and offer no confusion at the front end.

Howard Darrin managed to convince the Packard officials to order several/or actually begin limited production of his design. The operation was moved from California to Connersville, Indiana.

The 1941 and 1942 Darrins were constructed at Cincinnati, Ohio at the Sayers and Scoville plant. This move was at the suggestion of the Packard management.



This is the wildest Darrin of all. It is really a customized custom car, tastefully executed.

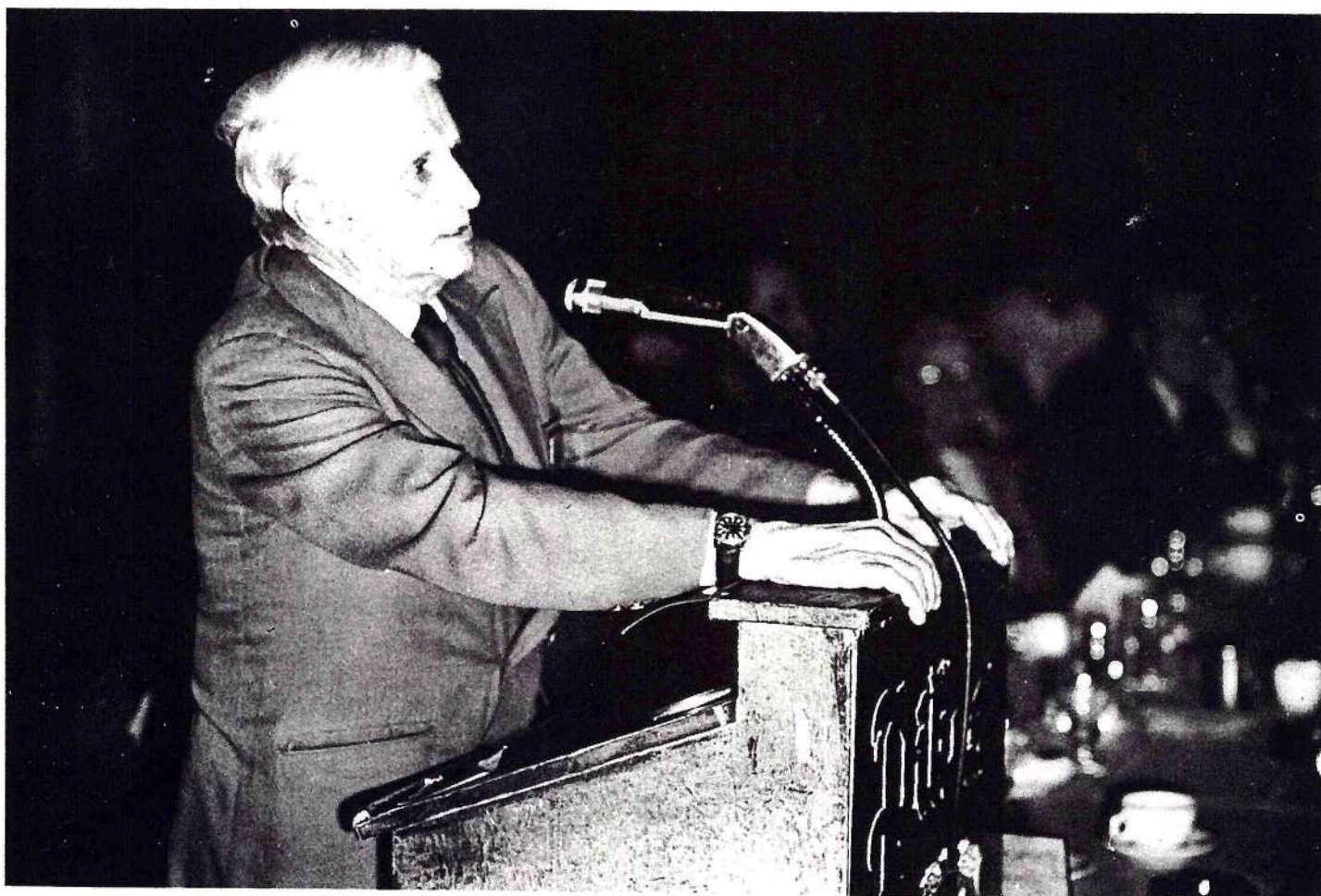


The management at Packard once objected to the aluminum cowl. They felt that it was too soft and weakened the body of the car. Mr. Darrin was enraged. He went to one of his cars in front of everyone, climbed up onto the hood, and then proceeded to jump up and down on the cowl. The management was convinced of its false assumptions.

The post war Packards continue to exhibit the influence of the earlier Darrin Packards. However, Mr. Darrin was no longer connected with the Packard Motor Car Company as a custom designer.

His exciting contributions to the automotive world were not over, as we are all aware of the Kasier Darrins of the early 1950's. Mr. Darrin resides in California today, and he is very active through the many national car clubs as a lecturer—and there are stories circulating that he intends to revive his "Darrins" of the forties . . . We certainly look forward to this.

One final note about these Darrin Packards. Individual as they are, this was not enough for one man. I have included two pictures of a Darrin that has been referred to as "The Walsh Darrin". The car was originally a 1938 120 Darrin. It was purchased used by James C. Walsh, Jr., an attorney in Oakland, California. He is responsible for the transformation that you see here. This was done in the early 1950's.



16 Beginning at the front end. The bumpers are reconstructed '34 Cadillac bumpers. Headlights are from a '39 Rolls-Royce. Hood ornament is the famous Pierce-Arrow Archer. The thermostatically controlled louvers of the Packard grille have been replaced by the "egg crate" '36 Cadillac grille. Front fenders are a combination of '34 Cadillac and Chrysler LeBaron fenders. Parking lights are from a Jaguar. '32 Duesenberg wire wheel covers were cut to fit and '32 Buick restyled caps were added. Taillights are '37 Lincoln Zephyr. The unique deck lid is a reversed '36 Auburn Lid.

Mr. Walsh Jr. committed the ultimate sacrilege by removing the entire Packard drive train and replacing it with a modern Cadillac engine and rear end. The transmission was '39 Cadillac.

This car was shown at many automobile shows in California in the 1950's. Then somewhere in the early 1960's it disappeared from view. Four years ago the Walsh Darrin was in a restoration shop in Southern New Jersey. But today it has again disappeared! Wonder where it is today?

Note: There are rumors that in 1939 one or two Darrins were constructed with V-12 engines. But to date none have been found and no records can support this contention.

1937
Style: Roadster
Bhp: 120
Wheelbase: 120"
Total production: 1

1938
Style: Victoria
Bhp: 120
Wheelbase: 127"
Price: \$4,200.
Total production: 8

1939
Style: Victoria
Bhp: 130
Wheelbase: 127"
Price: \$5,300.
Total production: 10
Note: Approximately 6 were also built on 120 chassis — all were Victorias.

1940
Style: Victoria (120)
Bhp: 120
Wheelbase: 127"
Price: \$3,800.
Total production: 15

1940
Style: Victoria (180)
Bhp: 160
Wheelbase: 127"
Price: \$4,593.
Total production: 30

DARRINS CONSTRUCTED 1937 — 1942

1940
Style: Convertible Sedan
Bhp: 160
Wheelbase: 138"
Price: \$6,332
Total production: 7

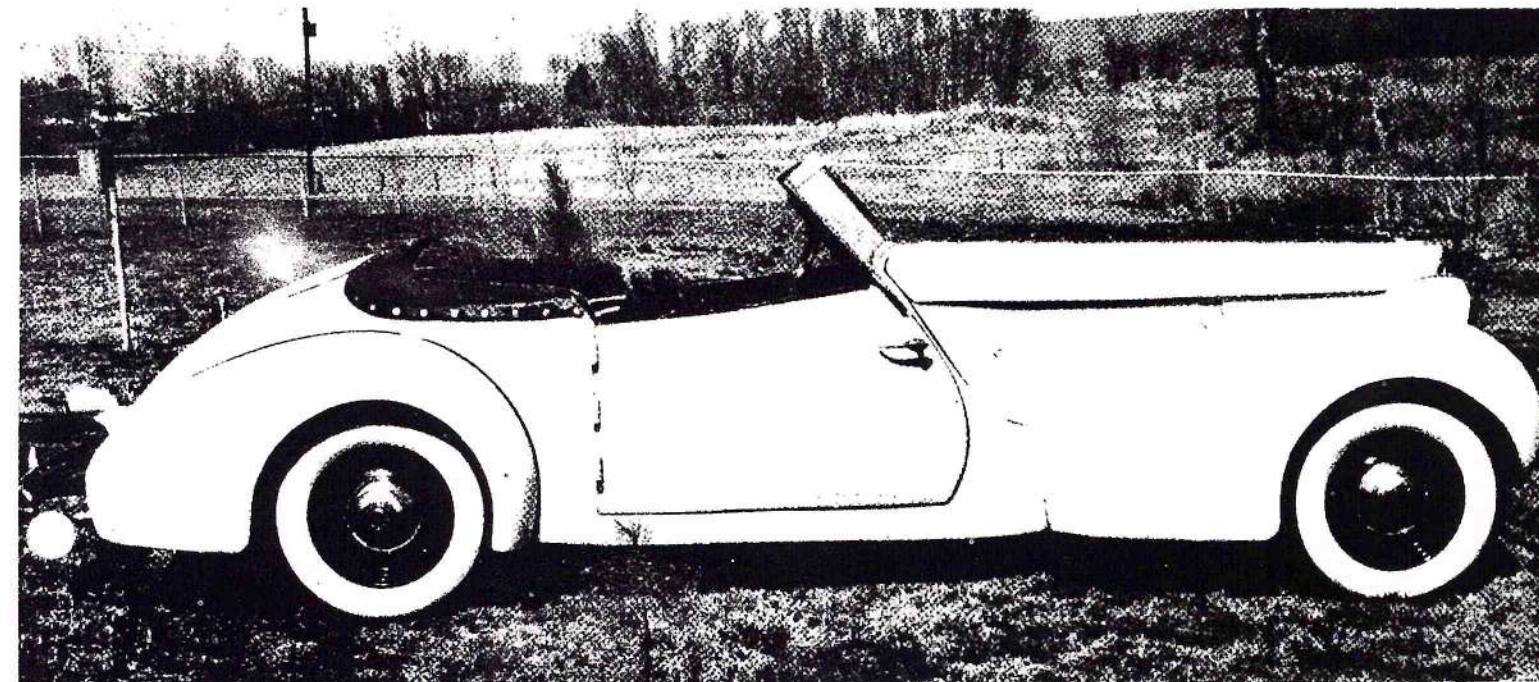
1940
Style: Sports Sedan
Bhp: 160
Wheelbase: 138"
Price: \$6,100
Total production: 2 or 3

1940
Style: Town Car
Bhp: 160
Wheelbase: 138"
Price: n.a.
Total production: 1

1941
Style: Victoria
Bhp: 160
Wheelbase: 127"
Price: \$4,685
Total production: 35

1942
Style: Victoria
Bhp: 160
Wheelbase: 127"
Price: \$4,783
Total production: 15

Clark Gable's Packard Darrin



Mr. & Mrs. Sam Broadhead



Recalling Dutch and the Darrin Touch

story by
Edward J. Blend, Jr.

Fernandez & Darrin was the linear descendant of Hibbard & Darrin, the coachbuilding enterprise begun in Paris by Tom Hibbard and Howard "Dutch" Darrin in 1922, and dissolved nine years later when Hibbard returned to the United States to join forces with General Motors. A banker by the name of Fernandez subsequently joined forces with Darrin, and they established a factory in the countryside and a very chic showroom on the Champs-Elysees.

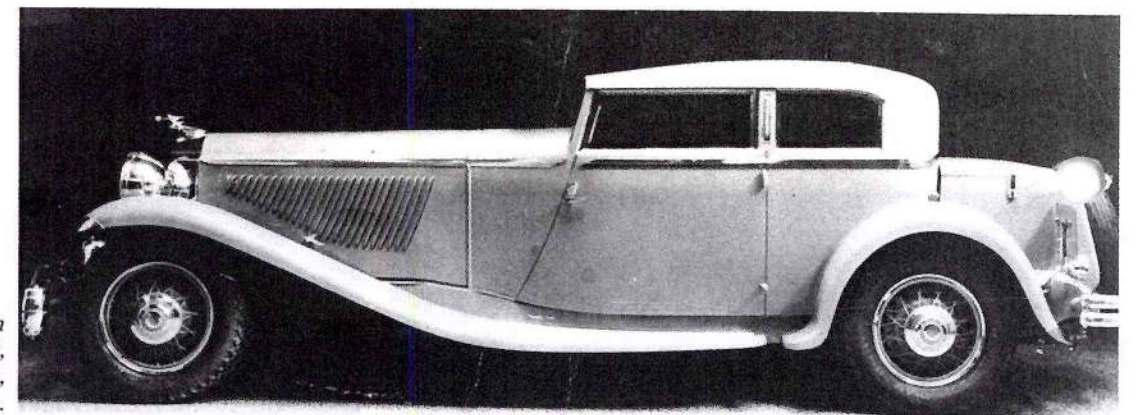
Suffice to say, among other reasons, this French enterprise was created to offer Americans French-type bodies and the Europeans an American chassis. Unique, and sometimes seemingly bizarre, Fernandez & Darrin creations were the result. Generally speaking, there was better acceptance of radical departures from the coachbuilding norm by the moneyed set on the Continent. But this Franco-American melding served both national interests. It was less expensive to produce custom bodies in France, and they could cross the Atlantic with a lower import duty being exacted. Americans rather liked their Detroit cars returning to the States and being taxed at used body value. For a reasonable outlay, they could then flaunt Darrin's newly rounded and triangulated styles that were so different from the traditional box and straight belt lines still in vogue in America. Truly a refreshing change, one sure to be noticed at the country club.

One of the hallmarks of Darrin designs could be found in the spun and polished wire wheel covers that chauffeurs liked

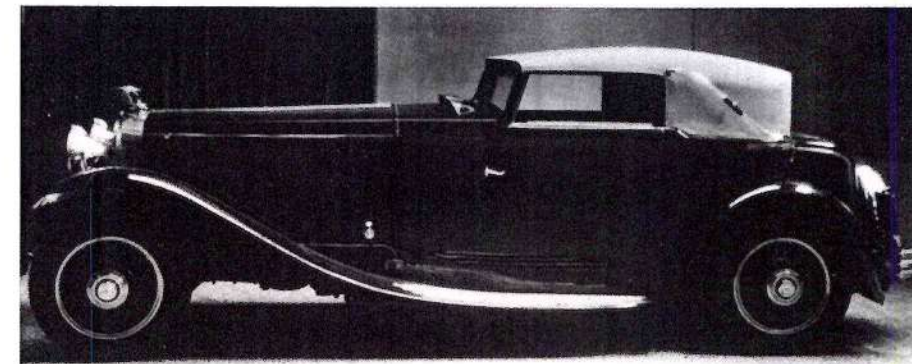
so well. A Darrin-improved case line below the window reveals influenced Edsel Ford to license this treatment for Lincoln cars. Harley Earl of General Motors also used designs patented by Darrin. The trapezoid flap on convertibles was licensed to American, English and Italian auto builders, a feature that gradually grew into more triangulated motifs. There were exaggerated functional and nonfunctional European-inspired landau irons. Light colors emphasizing a car's beauty rather than hiding it became prominent. Darrin's painters had attained a depth of finish never approached with the old varnish paints, and the principle was carried over to Fernandez & Darrin facilities where heated rooms improved final finish quality. There was the hood spear; I wonder if Packard lifted this one for use on its Eighth Series cars. And there was more: a new emphasis body hood moulding that originated at the radiator shell and continued back around the windshield past the rear door; fully hand-carved and covered rear seat backs in ultimate cabinetmaker's art style and finish; and, lastly, the little seen but fully successful cast Sylent Lyte aluminum bodies.

That was Darrin in France. Events conspired, however, and by the late Thirties an American colony of 28,000, largely domiciled in Paris, had dwindled to less than 6000. Dutch was among those who left. Settling into the Hills of Beverly, he was introduced to Hollywood's "in" crowd by Darryl Zanuck. Dutch had earlier finagled Zanuck into the Polo Club in Paris, a gesture which obviously paid off now. Darrin was touted as

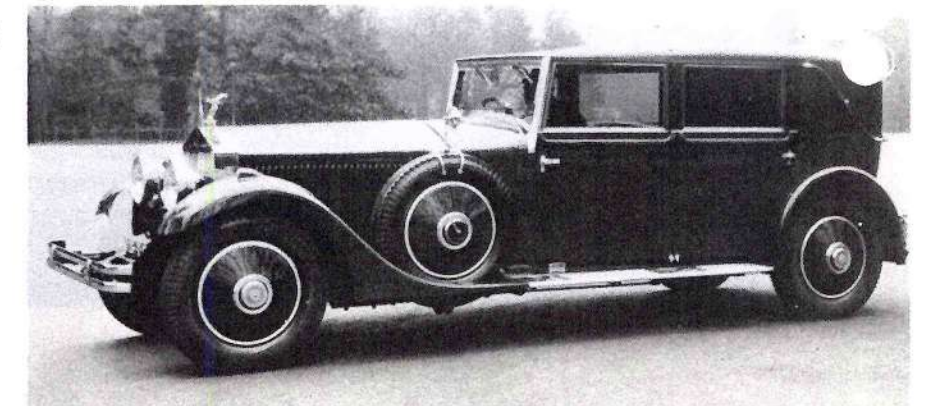
Page opposite: Fernandez & Darrin coachwork on a '33 Packard 1006, owned by Robert D. Briglia, photograph by D. Michael Heiser.



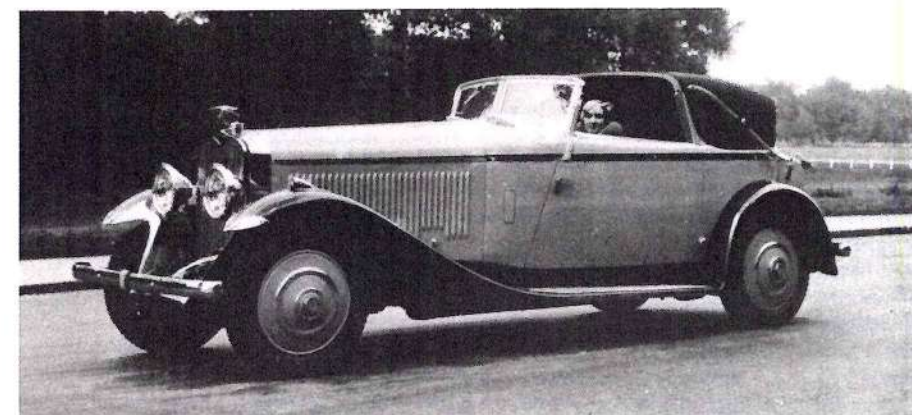
Above: Darrin artistry on a '31 Packard 845. The year previous Darrin had been accorded an award (Brevet d'Invention) for his concept of under-cowl steering, soon to be used in France and here in the States. There was no practical need for the idea, but it did allow the designer full reign to create some of the world's longest hoods.



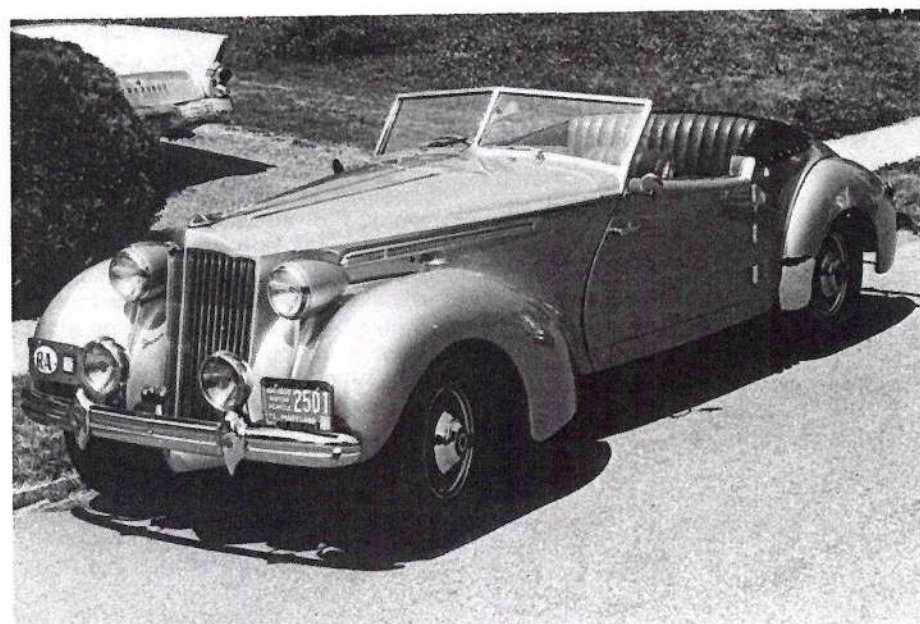
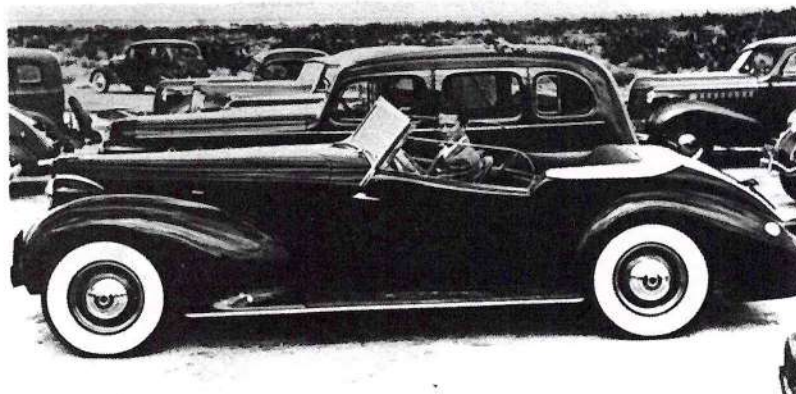
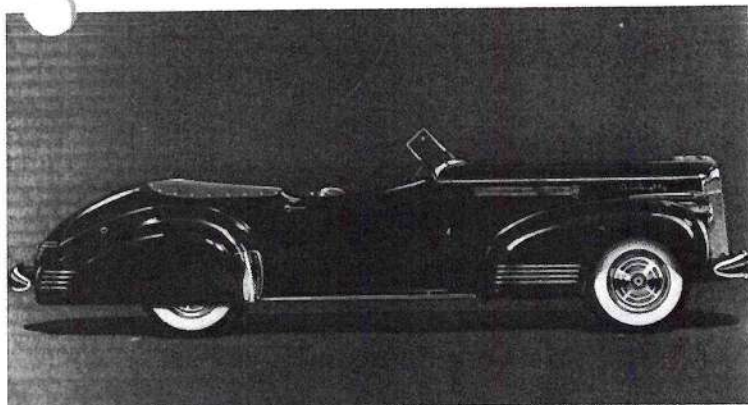
Above, Convertible coupe victoria by Fernandez & Darrin on an Hispano-Suiza 46 CV chassis. The under-cowl steering, landau bars and three-bar bumper are characteristic hallmarks of Darrin's touch.



Above: A prize-winning sedan-limousine by Fernandez & Darrin on the Rolls-Royce Phantom II chassis which lent itself so well to Darrin designs. Note wheel covers, stainless steel "see-through" running boards.



Above: Coupe de ville on a Hispano chassis by Fernandez & Darrin.



the parapet describing the Classics as they passed by, inside the lower hallway stood Dutch, stoic, hands in his great coat pockets, listening and occasionally nodding in agreement as the review continued. I had struck up a conversation with two lovely couples from Mexico, CCCA members who had journeyed to the cold clime of Pennsylvania just to hear Dutch. One of the gentlemen owned a 1940 Darrin and asked if I knew its designer. I said, "No, but there he is. I'll go over and ask him if he has time to have a few words with you." I explained the circumstances to Dutch, about Mexico's only Packard Darrin, and four people from Mexico, being on hand, which naturally pleased him. He would be happy to talk with them. Coincidentally, I believe one man's name was Fernandez.

Reflecting upon all of the stories that have been bandied about Dutch Darrin and his life of style, I discovered that day that most of them undoubtedly were true. Those two beautiful Mexican ladies wilted under the Darrin finesse, as he ever so gallantly bowed from the waist and brushed his lips over each of their proffered right hands.

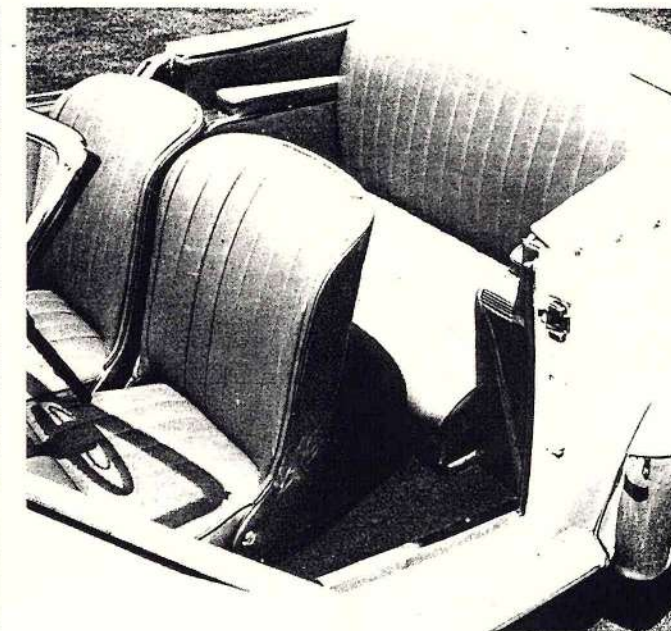
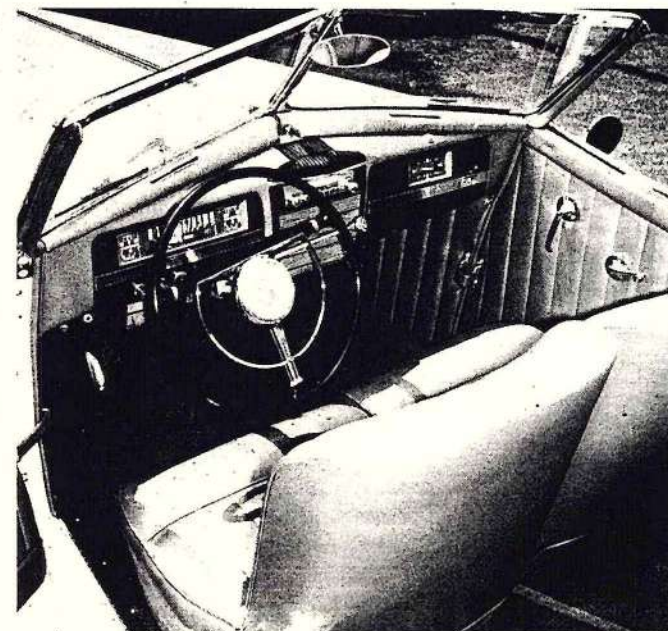
Further elucidation of the man called Darrin could be provided in many other examples, but they scarcely seem necessary. Better to linger awhile over his creations, which are as Darrin as Dutch. He's quite some guy, this fellow Darrin.

CAPTION NOTES BY THE AUTHOR

In December 1939 the first Packard ad in Fortune showing a Darrin (page opposite, above left) noted the Custom Sport Sedan as "Body by Darrin," though no price was suggested. The 1940 Fortune ad (above right) did not identify Darrin but quoted a price of \$4570. The actual car (below) as it appeared when shown by C. Richard Bell at the Blue Dell Meet in 1954. By early 1941 the basic Darrin design had been altered (this page, above left) with the hinging of the door at the front for more rigidity, and a smoothing out of the door kickup. One of the first Packards to use Darrin of Paris handiwork (above right) featured the door sill rake, running boards and unlouvered hood sides. The 1939 Packard by Darrin owned by Ken Hinds (below) indicates the characteristic Darrin door sill rake, as well as a quite severely squared-off windshield.

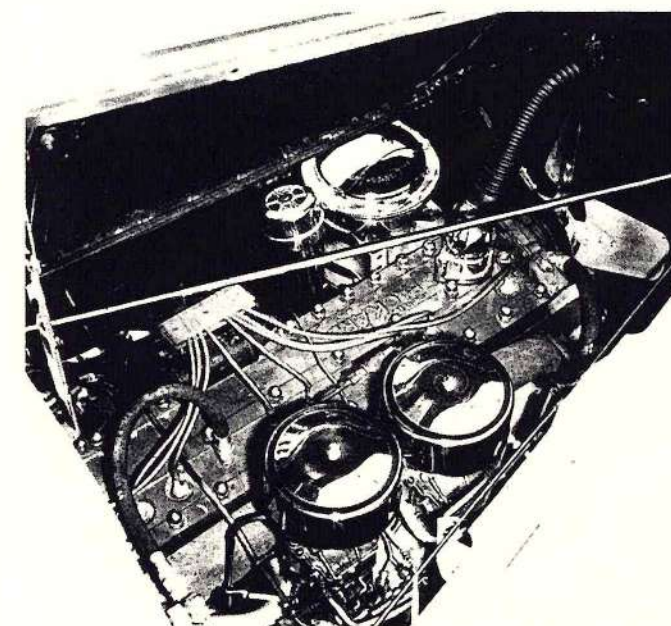
'41

Dutch Darrin and Packard
got together on
this Convertible Victoria.



DARRIN'S DANDY

When Packard automobiles are mentioned, the most usual mental response is to think of large, classic-proportioned vehicles with considerable dignity. Not at all in this mold, however, is the Packard-Darrin Convertible Victoria which has great style in the sporting manner. Built on a 127-inch wheelbase, the car's most notable feature is the cut-down door profile. However, the steeply raked and V'd windshield with chrome plated framework is at least as important in the sporty appearance. The top is designed to disappear, giving good lines when the top is down. The 160 hp straight-eight engine provides ample performance.



Photography: Ralph Poole

70 old car illustrated

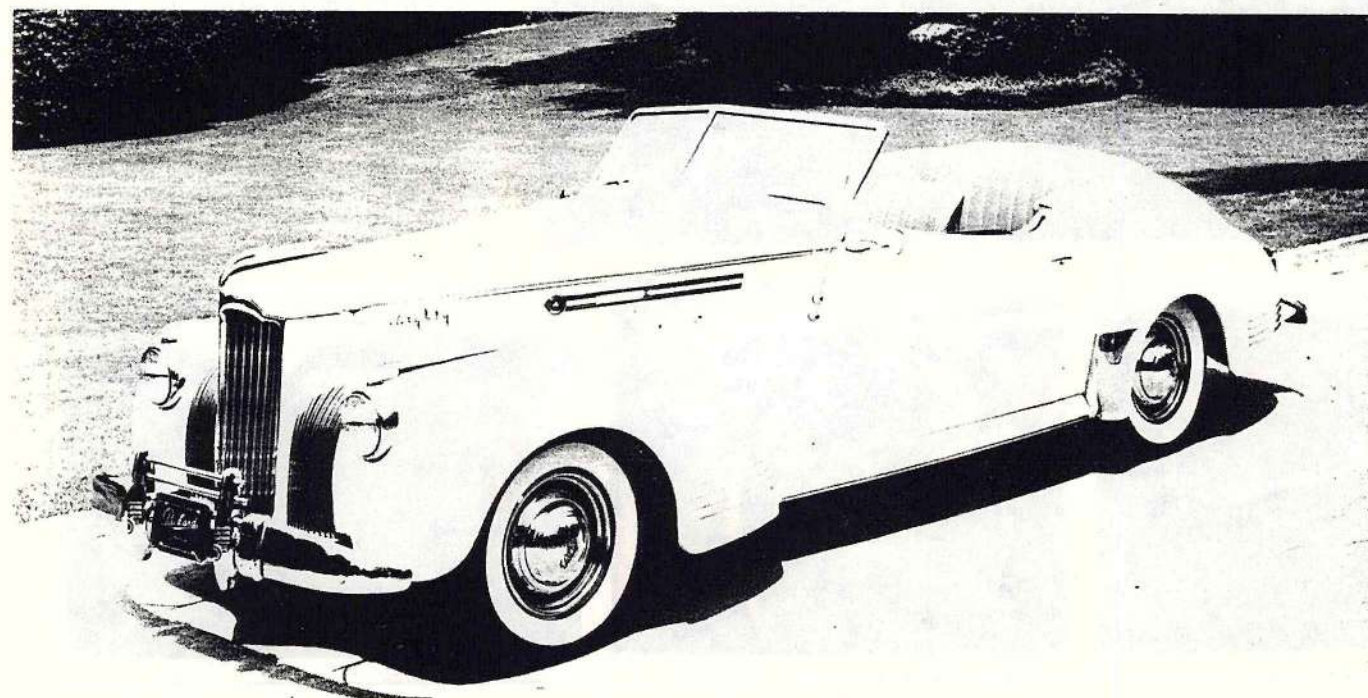
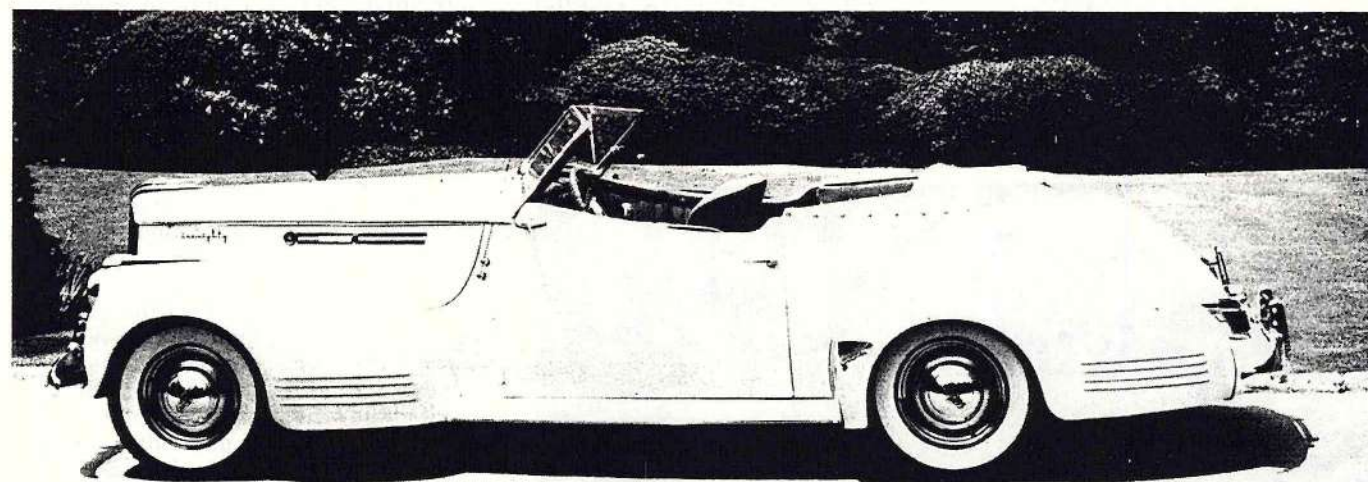
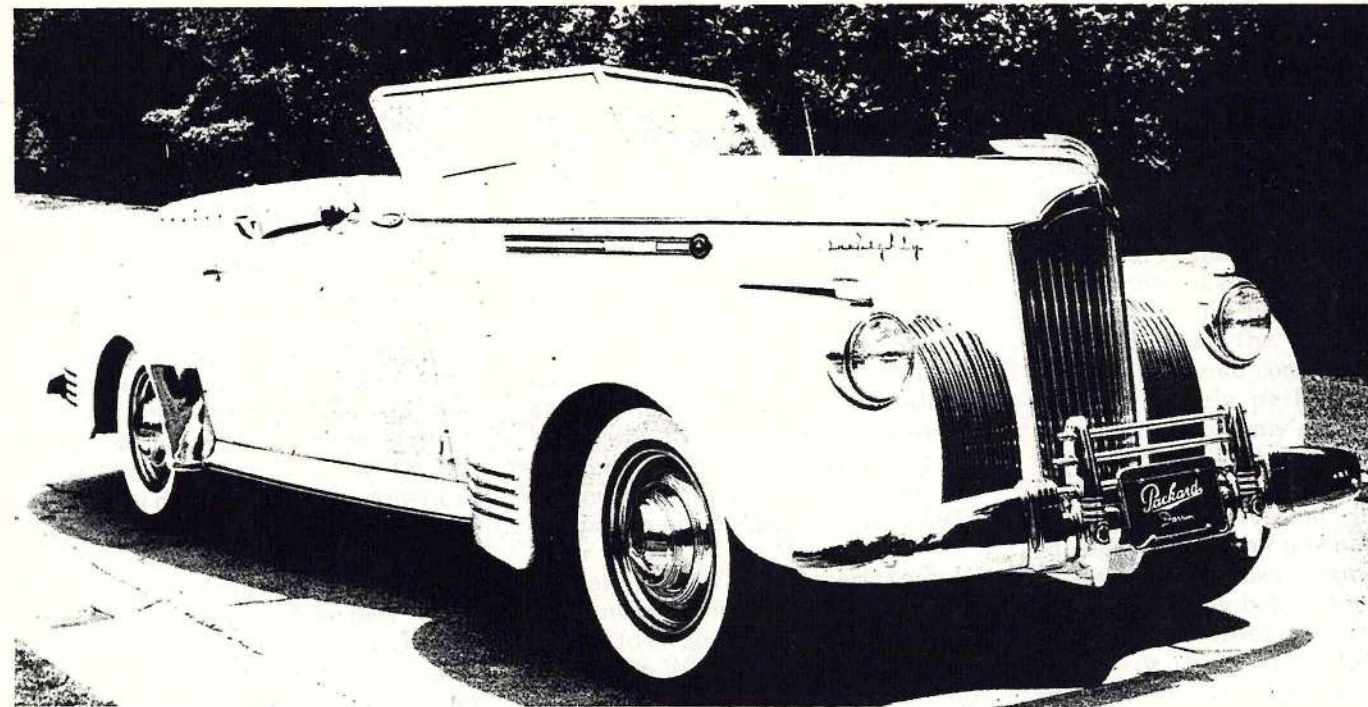


Photo Feature: 1940 Packard Darrin Custom
Super-8 One-Eighty Convertible Victoria



Given the times, it was inevitable that Packard would drop its expensive, slow-moving V-12 (only 46 built for '39). Thus, for 1940, Packard consolidated its assembly lines and began building the senior Packards alongside the junior cars.

Replacing the V-12 was the Custom Super-8 One-Eighty. True, it cost \$2000 less than the V-12, but lest anyone think it didn't measure up, Packard staged a race at its Proving Grounds, which the 160-bhp straight eight

won easily. It was, after all, America's most powerful production engine, save for the Cadillac V-16.

Style-wise, Packard



Photo Feature

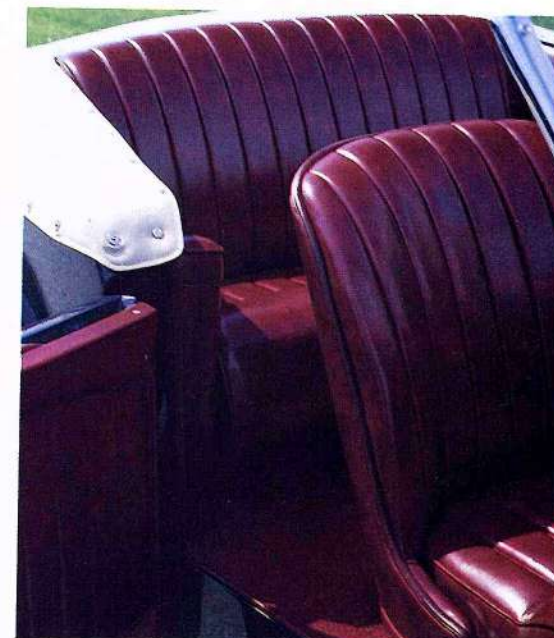
maintained a conservative image, but Howard "Dutch" Darrin, noted designer of custom-built cars, had been adding pizzazz to Packards since 1937. By 1939, Packard management had taken note, and so for 1940 two Packard Darrins were listed: a \$6332 Convertible Sedan and a Convertible Victoria for \$4593. The latter was advertised in the *Saturday Evening Post* as "Glamour Car of the Year! (Of course, it's a Packard)."

The Darrin Victoria gained its sporty looks from its cut down doors, raked windshield, sawed-off running boards, and lowered hood and grille. To its credit, the rakish Victoria went on to win "classic" status from the Classic Car Club of America.

The ragtop Victoria quickly became a status symbol, catching the eye of more than one famous star. Drummer Gene Krupa, for example, bought one. So did Carol Lombard—as a Valentine's Day present for her actor husband, Clark Gable. He had been busy during 1939 filming *It Happened One Night* and playing the part of Rhett Butler in

Gone With the Wind, and perhaps it was for that immortal role that she bestowed upon him such a lavish gift.

The Darrin Victoria seen here—owned by Mrs. Benjamin R. Caskey, Jr., of Vero Beach, Florida—is the very car that was given to Clark Gable. Built in the old Connorsville, Indiana Auburn plant, it is one of an estimated run of about 50. This Darrin was



reportedly the only one to sport wind wings, and is also fitted with Tripp driving lights and a radio. The Gun Metal Grey exterior is complimented with red trim, and set off against a deep maroon interior. It's easy to picture Carol Lombard and Clark Gable climbing aboard and, in an eye blink, being *Gone With the Wind*!



used for structural support for the skin. Up until the development of quality stampings for large sheet-metal panels, all automobile bodies were built with a wooden framework that was covered with sheetmetal panels. These panels were actually nailed in place over wood, with strips of semi-flexible metal moldings used to cover the seams. It was precisely because of this method of construction that automobile customizing as we know it was developed. Since a manufacturer or coachbuilder didn't have to invest hundreds of thousands of dollars in tooling up stamping dies for production body panels, which he would have to produce in large quantities to pay off, there was the freedom to vary designs easily. Many different body styles could

be arranged and when a special order came in for custom body, it wasn't much more difficult to produce than a production body.

There have always been people "of means" who weren't satisfied to have a production body. They would have a special body built to their tastes and picked out of a set of designer's drawings, or they would have a production body modified or restyled. The extent of customizing varied from simple custom paint treatments to mild fender changes to a completely new one-of-a-kind body. The car manufacturer's catered to these custom body builders, or coachbuilders, by building a percentage of their production cars with only the main body in place; the radiator shell, hood, fenders and other accouterments to be added by the coach-

builder. Many of the luxury cars like Lincolns, Packards, Cadillacs and others were often delivered to various coachbuilders as a bare chassis, on which a completely custom body would be produced for a wealthy client. Some manufacturers, such as the most famous and exotic of American cars the Duesenberg, never produced a "production" body at all! They simply built a luxury chassis and powerful drivetrain as the basis for the coachbuilders to weave their sheetmetal fantasies on. The closest such manufacturers came to a "standard" body would have been when one of the coachbuilders built several similar customs.

DECLINE IN USE OF WOOD

The decline in the use of wood in automobile construction was hastened by the rise of the business to major industry status, requiring that more and more steel be used in construction and that body panels be stamped out by the thousands to meet demands. The automobile had become more than a plaything for the rich, it was in the 1920's a virtual necessity for every family. The first of the all-steel bodies was built for Dodge in 1921 by the Edward G. Budd Manufacturing

1. The epitome of the coachbuilding era were the custom-built bodies on the Duesenberg chassis, such as this Bohman & Schwartz convertible coupe for actress Mae West. Luxurious and fast, these cars were sold as chassis only, there were no "production" bodies.

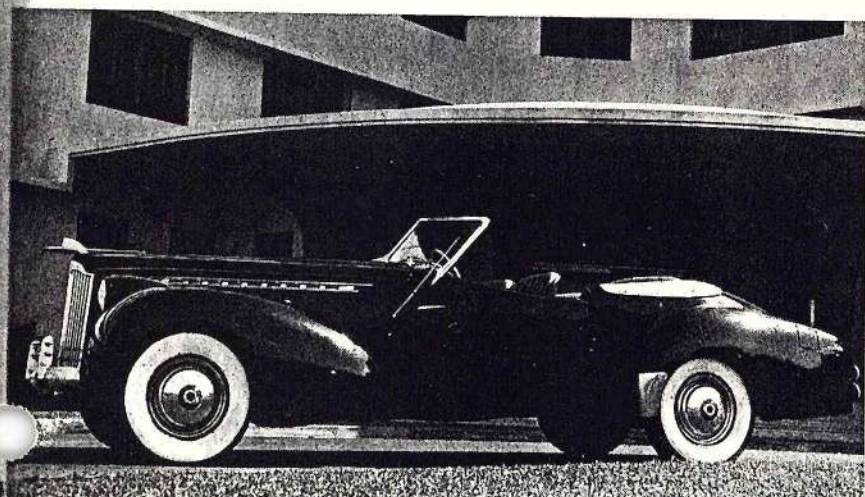
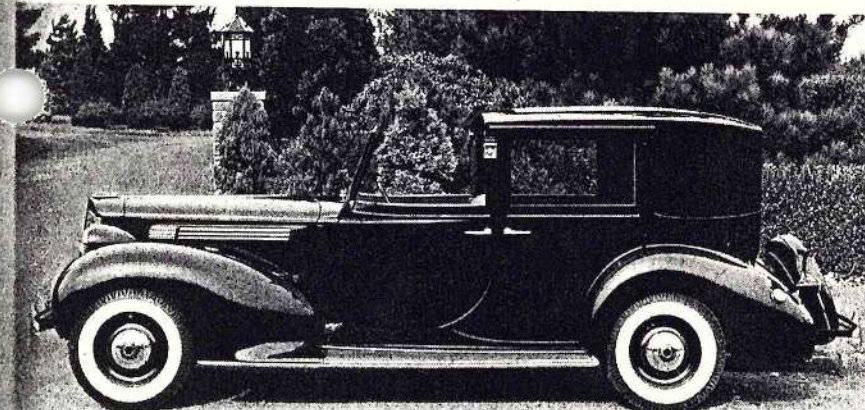
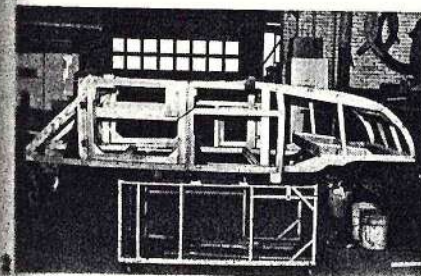
2. Up until the late Twenties, most cars used a wooden framework for the body panels, and coachbuilt customs used wood right up to the Forties.

3. When cars had wood-framed bodies, building a custom body was no more work than a stocker; a new frame to the designer's specs was built and covered with metal, like this dual-cowl phaeton being restored by the artisans at California Metal Shaping.

4. While there were a few cars that were sold as chassis only, most of the coachbuilding business involved custom bodies built on standard luxury-car chassis. This carriage-style "panel brougham" by Deiham is on a 1938 Packard chassis, built for famous opera singer Lily Pons.

5. By the Forties, most of the real coachbuilding had died. Custom bodywork stayed alive however, as there were still those people who wanted something different and sporty. Movie people seemed to gravitate to sporterized passenger cars like this 1940 Packard customized by Howard "Dutch" Darrin, one of the few designers from the early days who never stopped restyling.

CREATIVE CUSTOMIZING 5



JAN 23 '81



Dutch Darrin examines his proposal for a post-war Graham-Paige in 1945.

California ...

'Dutch' Darrin Dies

One of autodom's greatest coachbuilders, Howard "Dutch" Darrin died January 4 at his home in Santa Monica, Calif. He was 84.

Darrin's classic designs, based on Packard, Hispano-Suiza, Duesenberg chassis, to name a few, will be remembered as some of the most beautifully proportioned automobiles ever built.

Darrin's first automotive assignment, in 1916, was to design an electric gearshift for John North Willys. Darrin was working for Westinghouse as an engineer at the time. He worked on a device but World War I interrupted and when the war ended, there was a backlog for any kind of car and the electric gearshift program was abandoned by Willys.

In 1920 Darrin founded America's first scheduled airline, Aero Limited with flights to Atlantic City, Miami, Palm Beach and several other cities. Four of his pilots were killed in a seaplane accident and the venture was soon sold.

Darrin then bought two Chrysler chassis from Walter P. Chrysler and mounted bodies on each of them. One of the cars was sold to Al Jolson. It was during this time that Darrin met Tom Hibbard, who had founded the custom body firm of Le Baron in 1921. They set up shop in 1922, calling it Hibbard and Darrin, and immediately travelled to Paris. Their intent was to build custom bodies for Minerva, a Belgian car maker.

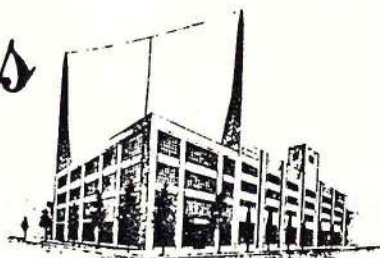
They went to the Paris salon (an auto show) the next year and their designs were a real hit. They started out selling custom-bodied Minervas to wealthy Frenchmen and Americans but they were soon consulting for General Motors, Stutz, Renault, Citroen, Rolls Royce, Daimler Benz and many others.

The Paris shows remained very important for Darrin and Tom Hibbard in the late 1920s. Their business was rapidly expanding and they were now building many custom bodies, on such prestigious chassis as Cadillac, Packard, Hispano and Delage.

In 1927 Darrin and Hibbard worked for General Motors. They had a one-year contract to do some designs for the firm. They were offered \$25,000 and \$1,000 per day for work done at the GM factory. But Darrin had a falling out with GM in 1928. After getting an advance look at the 1929 Buick, it was rumored around the place that Darrin had disapproved and this angered Harley Earl, chief of GM styling. Actually Darrin had not said anything about that Buick publicly. It was GM Chairman Alfred Sloan who hated the car, calling it the "pregnant Buick." But in 1931 Tom Hibbard was offered a job with General Motors and accepted. At this time Darrin made a pivotal career decision.

(Darrin, page 17)

Packard News



Carl C. Anthony, Inc. PACKARD MOTOR CAR CLUB

Vol. VII No. I

Southern California Region

Jan.-Feb. 1982

Designer Worked on and for Big Wheels

In the gilded era when big was beautiful and no one worried about gas mileage, Howard (Dutch) Darrin built cars bigger and more beautifully than anyone else.

Errol Flynn, Clark Gable, Greta Garbo, Rita Hayworth, King Leopold of Belgium and Lord Louis Mountbatten commissioned him to outfit them with spectacular wheels.

Darrin spent more than half a century designing and building astronomically priced cars for rich motorists on three continents. In addition to designing for the pre-eminent, Darrin worked for practically every major auto manufacturer in the world.

When he died in Santa Monica Jan. 3 at 84, he was the undisputed "Grand Old Man" of auto design, with such classics as the Kaiser-Darrin, the world's first production fiberglass car, and the Packard Clipper to his credit.

Unlike most auto designers, whose identity is hidden behind the manufacturer's coat of arms, Darrin was on a first-name basis with most of those he built for. It took four months to build Gable's car, and Gable came by almost every day to

buy a round of beer for the workmen. Gable once told Darrin that if he were to present a bill, at the rate the studios paid him, for all the time he had spent in Darrin's shop, it would come to \$200,000.

Darrin received his practical training from his father, the inventor of the self-operated elevator. After a short stint as a partner in one of the pioneer aviation companies, Aero Limited, Darrin bought a few chassis from Walter Chrysler and built bodies on them.

Mountbatten's Car

Next, Darrin and his partner, Tom Hibbard, prepared engineering sketches of special bodies they planned to mount on Minerva chassis and went to the 1922 Paris Auto Show. When the first day ended, Darrin and Hibbard, with only their sketches, had taken 20 orders at \$8,400 each.

Darrin spent more than 15 years in Paris. It was there that he designed and built Mountbatten's \$20,000 car, an incredible piece of machinery built on a Rolls-Royce chassis. Mountbatten prescribed every detail, down to the dimensions he wanted for his knees, his feet, extra seats and high hats. The

car was equipped with map cases, walnut paneling and a removable enclosure for the chauffeur.

Darrin did take enough time away from his Paris operation to earn a bronze medal in a flying competition, the Stern-Flug, in the 1936 Olympics in Germany. Adolf Hitler presented the award.

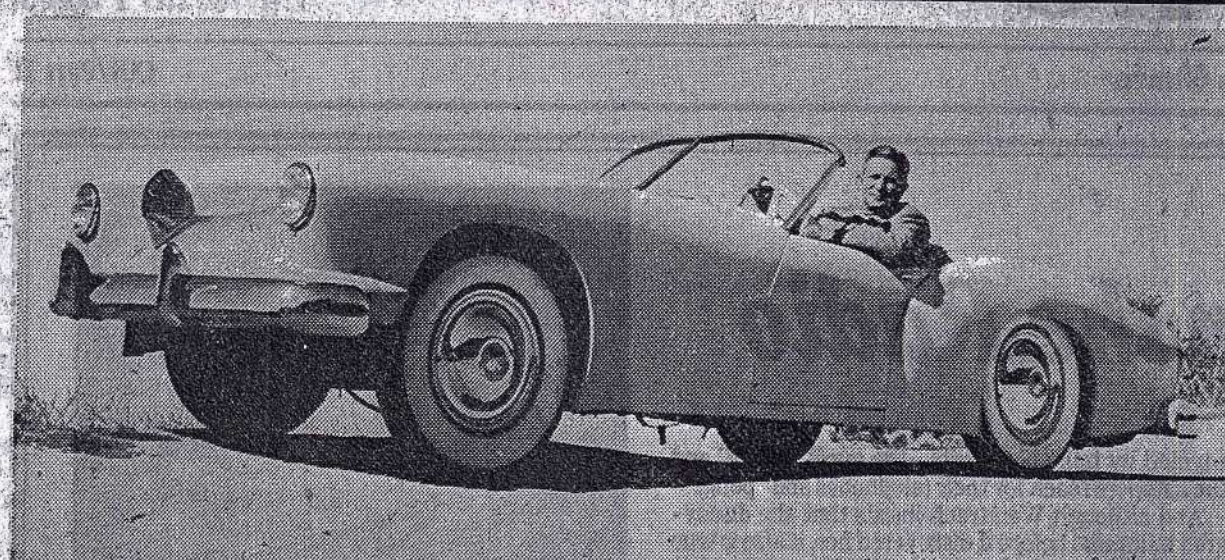
In 1937 Darrin moved to the United States, setting up shop on Sunset Boulevard, where several of his creations already cruised the streets. From then until 1972 Darrin designed cars for those who didn't balk at five-digit price tags. But he also shared his genius with the average American. The Jeep Wagoneer, still in production, was his design. Darrin designed for Willys Motor Co., Rolls-Royce, General Motors, Dodge, Mercedes, Studebaker, Packard, Citroen, Duesenberg and Hispano-Suiza.

For those efforts Automobile Quarterly named him "the world's foremost automobile designer" and Esquire called him the "Cellini of the assembly line." Darrin was recently honored by General Motors, who organized a "Dutch Darrin Day" in Detroit. Darrin considered it his favorite honor.

—DAVID FRENZNICK

Los Angeles Times

ASK THE MAN WHO OWNS ONE



Howard (Dutch) Darrin behind the wheel of the Kaiser-Darrin, one of the most popular of his designs.

Designer Worked on and for Big Wheels

In the gilded era when big was beautiful and no one worried about gas mileage, Howard (Dutch) Darrin built cars bigger and more beautifully than anyone else.

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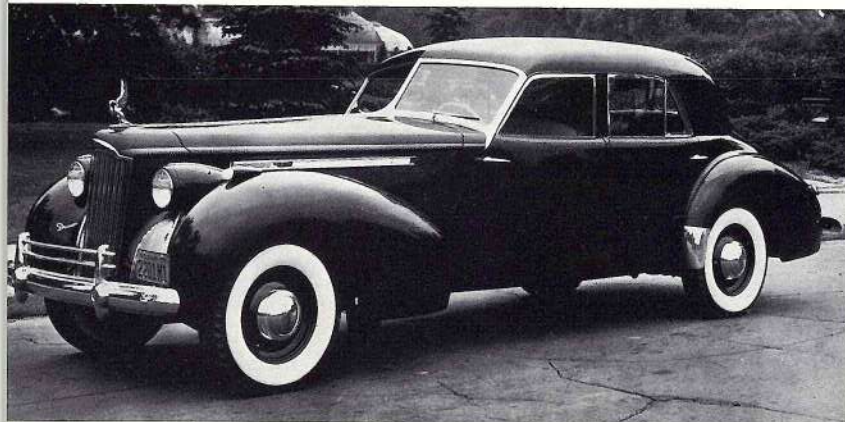
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—DAVID FRENZNICK



The Darrin Packards. Above left: A very early four-door, the first one run up by Dutch to indicate to Packard what he could do. Above right: A 1939 Victoria.

The Darrins, and all the other Senior Packards, provided a lineup for 1940 as follows:

	Type No.	8-8-39	2-5-40	7-1-40
SUPER-8 ONE-SIXTY				
Model 1803, 127 inches				
Business Coupe (2)	1373	\$1524	—	—
Club Coupe (2-4)	1375	\$1595	\$1605	\$1614
Convertible Coupe (4)	1379	\$1775	\$1787	\$1797
Club Sedan (5)	1376	\$1717	\$1732	\$1740
Convertible Sedan (5)	1377	\$2050	\$2065	\$2075
Touring Sedan (5)	1372	\$1632	\$1647	\$1655
Model 1804, 138 inches				
Touring Sedan (5)	1362	\$1895	\$1910	\$1919
Model 1805, 148 inches				
Touring Limousine (5-8)	1370	\$2154	\$2169	\$2179
Touring Sedan (5-8)	1371	\$2026	\$2041	\$2051
CUSTOM SUPER-8 ONE-EIGHTY				
Model 1806, 127 inches				
Club Sedan (5)	1356	\$2228	\$2243	\$2243
Convertible Victoria, Darrin (5)	700	\$4570	—	—
Model 1807, 138 inches				
Touring Sedan (5)	1342	\$2395	\$2410	\$2422
Formal Sedan (5-6)	1332	\$2825	\$2840	\$2855
All-Weather Cabriolet Rollson (5-7)	694	\$4450	—	—
Convertible Sedan, Darrin (5)	710	\$6300	—	—

Sport Sedan, Darrin (5)	720	\$6100	—	—
Model 1808, 148 inches				
Touring Limousine (5-8)	1350	\$2654	\$2669	\$2683
Touring Sedan (5-8)	1351	\$2526	\$2541	\$2554
All-Weather Town Car Rollson (5-7)	695	\$4575	—	—

If the new Packards, excepting the Darrins, were not cool—in the street lingo sense of the word—on the outside, the company decided to make them so on the inside. “Cooled by Mechanical Refrigeration in Summer” read a footnote to an advertisement appearing in February 1940. There was a home-appliance ring to the phrase, but then Packard was the first manufacturer in the industry to offer air conditioning on an automobile, so the quandary about what to call it was understandable. The company decided on Weather-Conditioner. It was bulky. The evaporator and heater plenum chamber were combined into one and installed in the trunk compartment under the package shelf, with a continuously operating compressor mounted up front on the right side of the engine near the water inlet. Thus the faster a car was driven the cooler it became; there was no clutch or automatic disconnect and it was recommended the drive belt be removed when cool weather came. But this did not solve a problem. There was no thermostat, a three-speed switch on the dashboard controlling the fan which blew the cooled air forward out of the package-shelf grille directly onto the soon-to-be-stiff necks of rear-seat passengers. And, even with the fan turned off, the cold air from the coil would merely drop into the floor area by gravity. The price for all this was a reasonable \$275—the frequently bruited thousand-dollar figure is a myth—but, still, keeping cool in the summer

Gene Krupa was enticed; he bought one and while drumming away at the Hotel Sherman in the Windy City, he had Packard-Chicago paint the car in the "standard Krupa color, Packard cream with red wheels."

The Darrins were the first Packards to omit running boards. At least one of the early Victorias sported them, but others of his California specials had rocker panels flush with the door, and on the production victoria cars the door itself extended down over the frame with no panel or molding visible. That was a daring concept; indeed, the absence of running boards themselves was looked upon askance in some sections of the industry.

The Darrin sedan showed the influence of the 1938 Cadillac 60 Special, the top being a separate entity from the body, while the trunk was integral with it. The graceful gentle swayback of the door line shown in the ads, however, became almost straight when built, losing much of the appeal. In the convertible variation, it was probably the handsomest ever to come on the market, possessing none of the bulk usually found in that type of body.

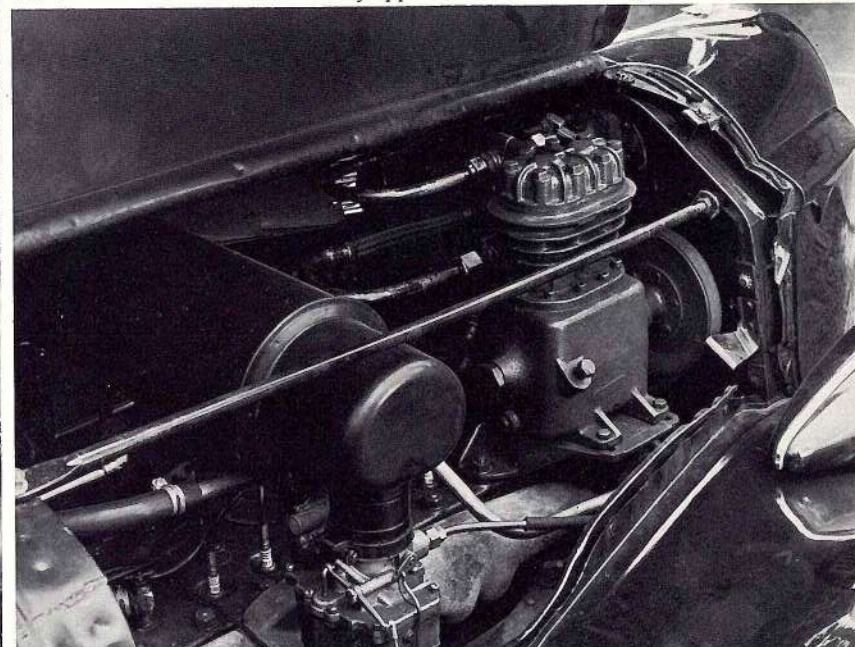
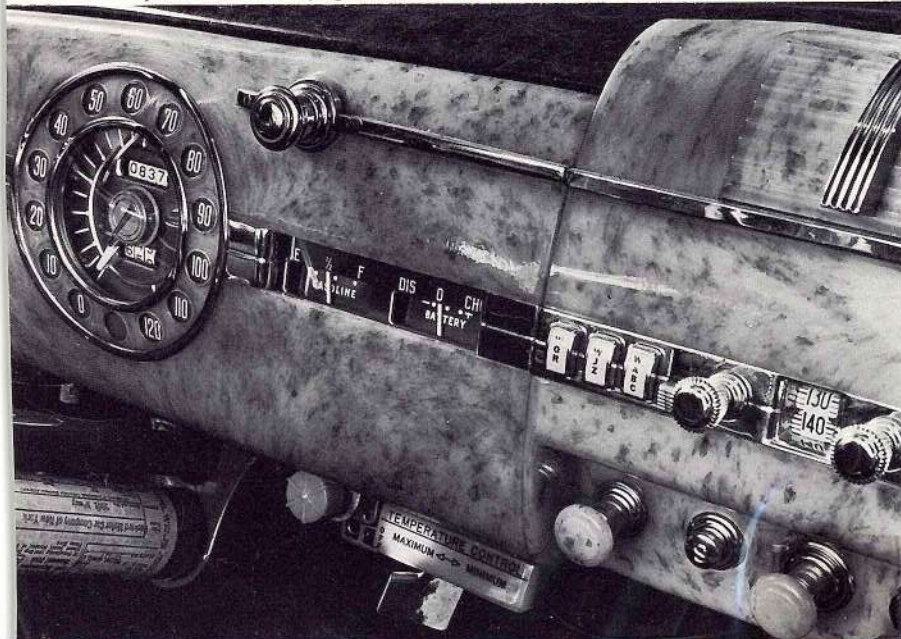
The Victoria was built for the 127-inch wheelbase and was also available on the One Twenty at \$3800. Aside from insignia, smaller bumpers, non-moveable grille and metal dash on the One Twenty, it was difficult to tell them apart, as all Darrins had sectioned and lowered radiators and hoods, and special narrow hood louvers. For this reason of lowness, side-mounted spare wheels could not be supplied; they "would

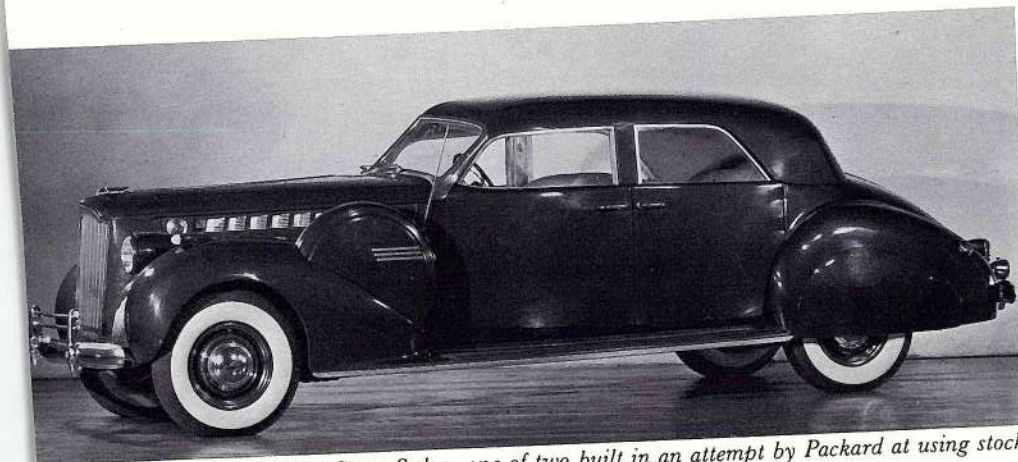
definitely detract from the appearance."

Another detraction which became apparent under road use was the unstable front end. P.S. de Beaumont, an engineer at Packard then, has related that Darrin removed the heavy frame cross member under the radiator in order to lower that unit, substituting a thin strap which provided no strength to the fender braces, this resulting in a wobbly, vibrating front end at speed. It was de Beaumont's job to design a reinforcing kit which was sent out to all dealers who had sold Darrins with instructions that it be installed at factory expense. Today the word for all this would be "recall."

Darrin arranged to have the 1940 Victorias built in the old Auburn plant at Connersville, Indiana. In his shop in Los Angeles he built the prototype Sport Sedan, towed it to Indiana to be trimmed and painted for its introductory showing. Later, the pilot Convertible Sedan was built at Connersville. Both these sedans were on the 138-inch chassis and could borrow no body frame or panels except hood center panel and trunk lid from the production cars—and for this reason, they were the most expensive vehicles in the Packard line. There was an attempt made to produce a Darrin sedan using standard radiator and hood, and based on production doors, running boards and other parts, but only two were built. Two, at most, of the sedan models pictured in the catalogue were produced, perhaps as many as twelve of the Convertible Sedan (of which nine still exist), while the Victorias probably numbered up to fifty.

"Cooled by Mechanical Refrigeration in Summer," said Packard in February 1940, the dashboard control and the necessary apparatus under the hood pictured below.





Above left: A 1940 Sport Sedan, one of two built in an attempt by Packard at using stock parts. Above right: The Darrin Convertible Victoria for 1941.

and not too warm in the winter was scarcely a can't-miss proposition, and customers generally gave the idea the bye, if they could. A snafu developed here as well. Special insulation for cars so equipped was provided at the factory but, although noted in Packard literature as "factory installed," the refrigerating unit itself was actually fitted into the car by Bishop & Babcock in Cleveland, and in theory vehicles ordered with it were shipped there, the unit was installed and then the cars were forwarded to the dealers. In practice, however, some cars showed up at dealerships with unordered air conditioning—and in order to rid themselves of the cars, dealers discounted the units substantially. Cooling the air was an expensive experiment all around for Packard, and although continued (but with separate heaters) as an option until World War II, it was dropped thereafter until 1953. Packard engineer W.H. Graves has estimated that about two thousand units were installed.

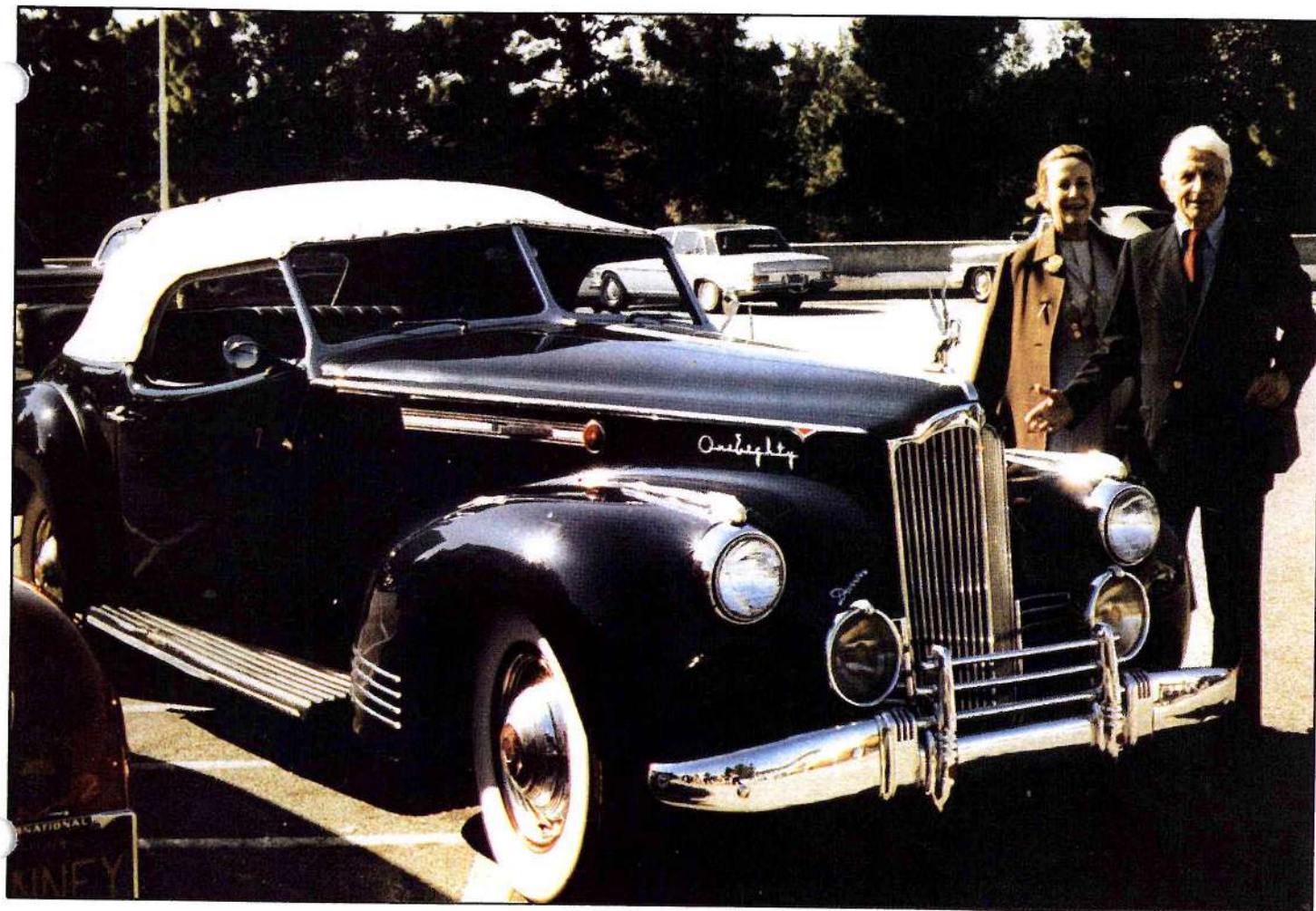
More successful certainly for Packard was the 1940 model year itself. Production was up from 46,405 in 1939 to 98,000—with 5662 One-Sixty models sold as compared to 3962 of the previous Super-8's, and 1900 One-Eighty models as opposed to the 446 Twelves in its last year of production. All this was to the good, but the figures were deceptive. Cadillac had overtaken Packard in fine-car leadership. The appearance identity between Junior and Senior Packards—in addition to the styling finesse of the Cadillac vis-à-vis the cars from East Grand Boulevard—provided dealers for General Motors' "Standard of the World" with pungent sales arguments. Here some further figures were more revealing. For model year 1940, GM produced 24,130 LaSalle and 13,046 Cadillacs; Packard's statistics were 28,138 for the One Twenty, 7562 for the One-Sixty and One-Eighty. In this spirited, and traditional, rivalry, the LaSalle had lost out to the One Twenty . . . but

Cadillac won convincingly over the Super-8's.

Industrywide, the figures were no more reassuring to Packard either. The company's 1940 sales had increased 14.7 percent over 1939. But the gain industry-wide was 27.8 percent. Clearly Packard was slipping.

Among the logical recourses the company had was the creation of a new car, one which would be separate from the established lines, one which if successful could chart a new course for the company, but if not could be eased out without damaging the traditional Packard product. Work had already begun on such a car, a fact which Packard spent the remainder of 1939 and all of 1940 denying. No, company officials told *The New York Times*, Packard was always experimenting but no new model was forthcoming. And when rumors became even more prevalent, these same officials leaked the news to *Automobile Topics* that plans for a new car—on which \$350,000 had purportedly been spent in preliminary work and die production—would, for the time being, be shelved. The Clipper arrived in April 1941.

Meantime, war was raging in Europe. Alvan Macauley, as president of the Automobile Manufacturers Association, announced that the leaders of the American industry were unanimously opposed to U.S. entry in the war: "The experience of the past has clearly demonstrated that the destiny of an industry such as this one lies in the enrichment of the lives of the people, not in destruction. Boom conditions based on manufacture of war implements have proven equally as ruinous to industry as to the welfare of the average man." But Packard was soon in the defense business, building marine engines for the Navy, contracting to produce aircraft engines for both Britain and America, ripping up parts of the new plant for these endeavors, putting automotive body dies and presses under tarpaulins, and in general preparing for an American



To have associated with all these; to have had the incredible luck he always acknowledged; to have enjoyed a rich career, and to have had fun doing it, is surely what the philosopher meant when he talked about living life to the fullest.

In 1937, Darrin moved to California, transferring his activities from individual-to semi-custom bodies, but maintaining a distinct style that branded them immediately as his own. Here he was aided by two experienced coachbuilders, Paul Erdos and Rudy Stoessel, the latter going on to found California's long-lived Coachcraft Inc. Typically, Darrin made do with little, buying a former bottling factory with a good location: Sunset Strip, Hollywood. "After fixing the place up I didn't have money to spend on plate glass windows," he said, "so we placed a plywood partition 10 feet behind the store front and displayed our new cars in the open. You could stand there at night and hear the screech of brakes and see cars backing up and people getting out to examine our wares." He styled himself "Darrin of Paris," and like Raymond Loewy he had an aristocratic French accent that he could turn on or off

as the need arose. Dutch's clientele now included the New World's aristocracy, such as Errol Flynn, Constance Bennett, Clark Gable, Ann Sheridan, and Carole Lombard.

Innately talented, Dutch was always personally involved in the cars that bore his name: everything from his custom bodies of the 1920s and '30s through his reskinned Rolls-Royce Silver Shadows in the '70s. Unlike Raymond Loewy, he was not a stylist-become-marketing expert, who discovered and hired talented employees and took credit (as Loewy had a right to do) for what they produced. Dutch did it all—even supervised the construction of semi-customs like the famous Packard Darrins. They might not have been paragons of craftsmanship, but by gosh they were unique, beautiful, and as dashing as all get-out.

Darrin's Packard connection stemmed from his decision to return to America from France in 1937. He realized that the age of full-custom bodies was waning, but thought the Hollywood film colony would buy rakish semi-customs. His concept, for which he deserves credit as a pioneer, was to customize production cars and produce

Dutch did it all. He even supervised the construction of his semi-customs including the famous Packard Darrins. They might not have been paragons of craftsmanship, but by gosh they were unique, beautiful, and as dashing as all get-out.

All 1941 Packards had the headlights moved down into the fenders, taking away some of the classic look, but maintained the tall, narrow, traditional "ox-yoke" grille. The most easily noticed feature on this Packard Darrin Convertible Victoria (above) is the "Darrin dip" in the doors, the designer's sporty trademark. Dutch and his wife are shown here standing next to the One Eighty, which curiously lacks the side grilles, has running boards, and the Darrin script up front.

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The Packard Darrins: Immortal Creations of a Breakaway Designer

After building custom bodies for the cream of European society in Paris, "Dutch" Darrin moved to California in 1937. Here, as "Darrin of Paris," he built semi-customs for the New World's aristocracy, such as Errol Flynn, Constance Bennett, Clark Gable, Ann Sheridan, and Carole Lombard.

by Richard M. Langworth

It's hard to believe that Howard A. "Dutch" Darrin has been gone for 10 years. He left an indelible imprint, not only on the automobile, but on the people he met in the old car movement, long after his career as a car designer and builder had ended.

The adjectives "crusty" and "hardbitten" accompanied Dutch Darrin like the words "breakaway republic" today accompany "Croatia." Indeed, he was a kind of "breakaway designer." He had opinions, and no reticence about expressing them. He had flashing blue eyes, snowy white hair in later life, a bubbling enthusiasm for what he liked, a withering contempt for what he didn't. Interviewing and reporting on Dutch was a test of a writer's finesse: the art of balancing Darrin's fierce convictions with the opinions of others who sometimes saw matters in quite a different way.

The first long distance phone call from California I can ever remember receiving was from Dutch Darrin, about some silly thing I had written as editor of the Kaiser-Frazer club quarterly in 1968, when I thought I knew all the answers. Dutch was

part of my education, teaching that the older you get, the more you see things in shades of gray instead of black and white. Dutch, it might be said, had never learned that lesson, but he taught it. For 15 years thereafter I would often lift the phone and hear the gravelly voice on the other coast say, "I love you, but you have to get this story straight. So listen up, dammit!" He'd go on to give the Darrin version of automotive history.

You can't please all of the people all of the time, and occasionally you'd credit the wrong designer. Do this with Brooks Stevens and you'd receive an elegant and polite correction by mail; do it with Raymond Loewy and he'd threaten to sue; do it with Dutch and he'd telephone: "I disagree with your conclusions and will not have my name attached to them. Good-bye." Come to think of it, he did the same thing at Kaiser-Frazer, when he took umbrage at something they'd done to alter his design for the 1951 Kaiser—so in 1952, off came the little chrome "Darrin Styled" nameplate, which Dutch had insisted they put on in the first place!

He had an automotive curriculum vitae

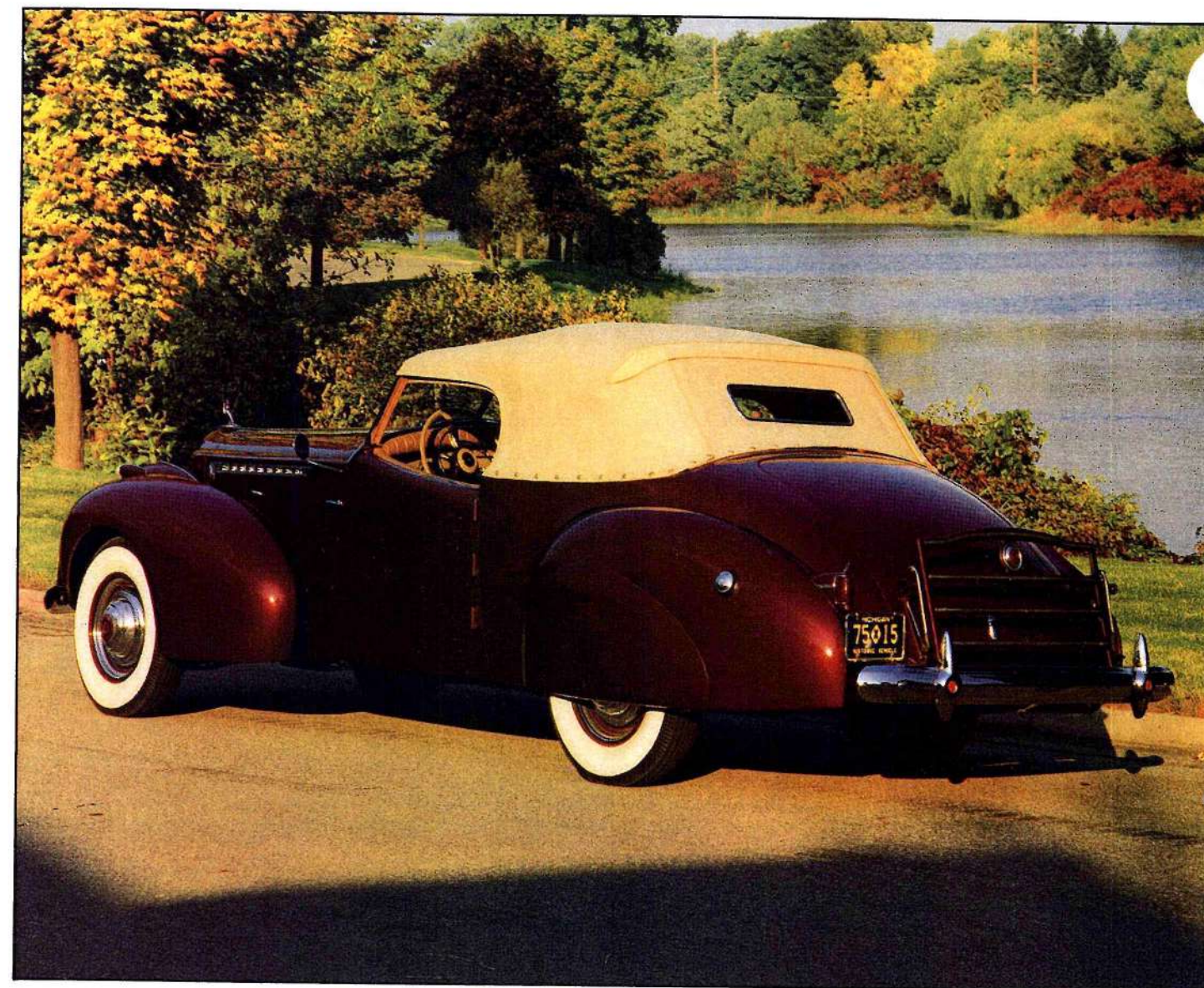
that put to shame most of his design contemporaries. Starting in the Teens as a Westinghouse engineer, he invented an electric gearshift for John North Willys, deciding then and there to spend his career on cars instead of electronics. When he went to France with the American Expeditionary Forces in World War I, he fell in love with Paris. In 1920 he founded America's first scheduled airline, Aero Ltd., but he soon returned to Paris and set himself up as a custom coachbuilder, initially using the Minerva chassis. He was shortly building custom bodies for the cream of European society, working on his own or in successful partnership with designer Tom Hibbard and, later, a banker named Fernandez.

To have known Dutch Darrin in fabled, between-wars Paris would have provided a writer with grist for a lifetime. Forty years later he would sparkle as he recalled Moulin Rouge, the Left Bank, and Montmartre in the Roaring Twenties. His friends were people the rest of us have only read about: René Mathis of Ford-France, André Citroën, Louis Renault, the brothers Panhard, Ettore Bugatti, Sir John Siddeley, princes and potentates, presidents and polo players.

Collectible Automobile®



The 1940 Packard still had individual headlights, in this case riding in the front fender catwalks. Twin grilles flanked the traditional Packard radiator, which is topped here with the cormorant (or pelican) hood ornament. The rest of the car came from the pen of Dutch Darrin, including the dip in the doors, the rakish convertible top, the lack of running boards, and the sleek overall lines. The interior was notable for its padded dash. The leather seating was intended for two, but because the gear shift lever had been moved to the steering column that year a third party could be squeezed in. The Convertible Victoria listed at \$4593, about three and a half times as much as a One Twenty ragtop. (Owner: David Hollis)



semi-customs—relatively inexpensive, yet distinct from mass-market stuff. Of Packard he said, "Its chassis was unimpeachable, and its classic grille was a great starting point." He had always fancied himself "a strong grille man," depending on the radiator to focus his designs, though his favorite American production car was the grilleless Cord 810/812, designed by a man Dutch considered a genius, the late Gordon Miller Buehrig.

Interestingly, Darrin preferred the chassis of the medium-priced Packard One Twenty to that of the Super Eight or Twelve. "For one thing, it was more up to date, and for another it was considerably lighter," he said. "By lowering the radiator I knew I could make a very beautiful custom-bodied Packard One Twenty with little change in its basic structure." Like Loewy, Darrin believed that "Weight is the Enemy." There was also an economic side to his reasoning: a One Twenty was much cheaper than a

senior Packard, and considerably easier to modify.

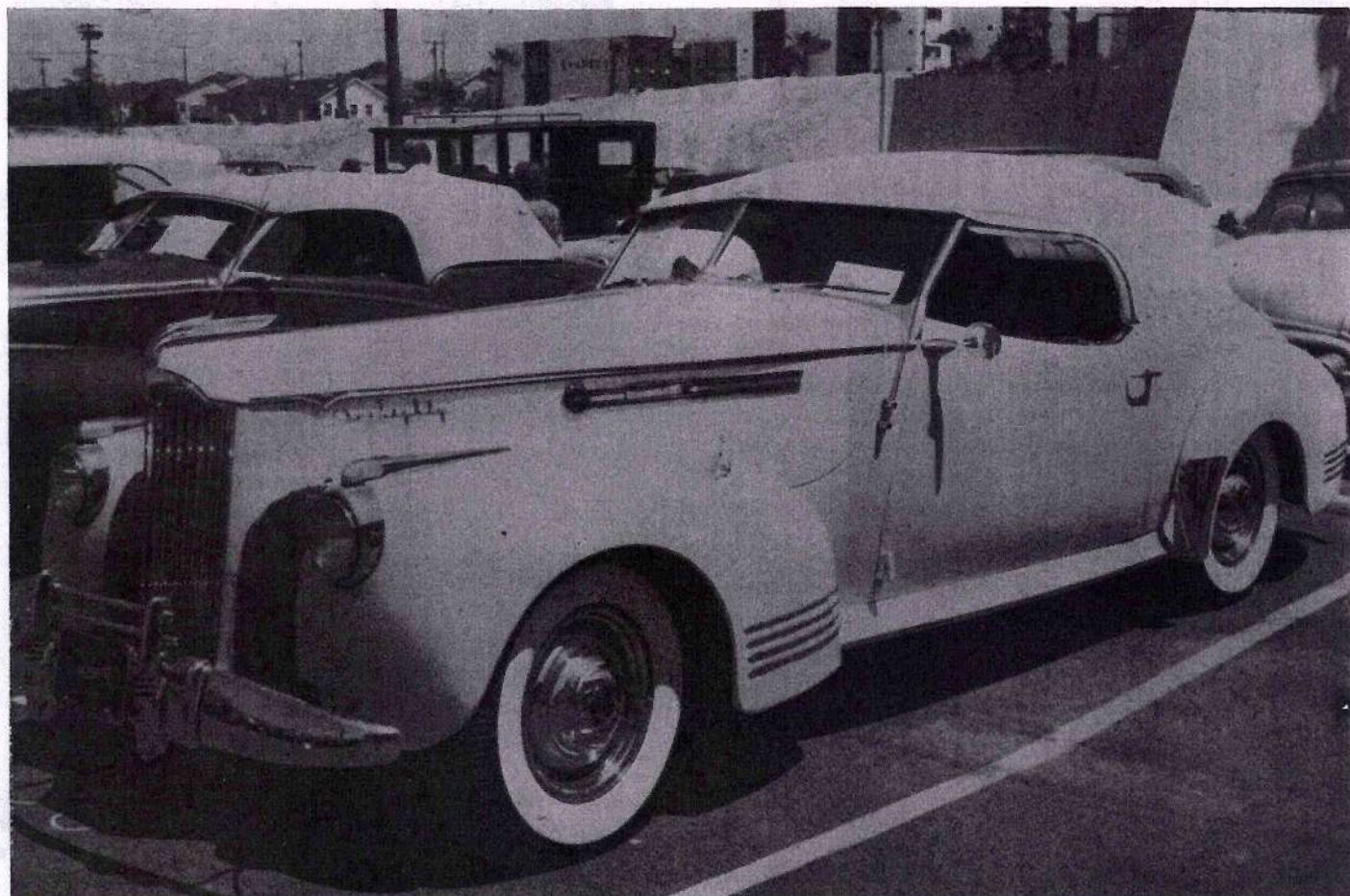
The first Packard Darrin taught Dutch a great deal about his semi-custom concept. Built in 1937 at a Los Angeles body and fender shop before Darrin moved into Sunset Strip, it was created for actor Dick Powell. The chassis was from a 1938 Eight (aka One Twenty) and the body looked splendid, with sweeping fenders and a low beltline displaying the characteristic "Darrin dip" at the doors. But Dutch had cut up a business coupe to build it, and chassis for closed cars weren't as rigid as those for open models. The car leaked like a sieve and had too much body flex.

Darrin built two more five-passenger Packard Darrins at another body shop before the move to Sunset Strip, selling one to Clark Gable. Like the first example, these had wooden cowl, which contributed most of the shake, rattle, and roll. Once "production" got rolling at Sunset Strip,

clever Rudy Stoessel designed a cast aluminum cowl, which made a huge difference on the 16-18 Darrin Packards built in 1938-39. Among their buyers were Rosalind Russell, Chester Morris, and Al Jolson, who each paid a cool \$4200-\$5200, probably equivalent to six figures in today's money. (That was peanuts compared to some of the esoteric specials the movie crowd was buying at the time, supporting Dutch's idea of relying heavily on production car components.) For some of these customers, Packard Darrins were simply *too* special. Dick Powell sold car number one after a few months because people were noticing, waving, and chasing him for autographs.

These early Darrins were strictly freelance jobs with no factory sanction blessing. Indeed, the sophisticated, online Packard Company back on Grand Boulevard in Detroit looked askance at Hollywood's custom body builder,

CLASSY CLASSICS CORNER



1941 PACKARD DARRIN CONVERTIBLE VICTORIA

by/Chuck Cooper

Harold Crosby is the 5th owner of this magnificent Packard. The car was one of approximately 70 made in 1941 and was originally sold to George Raft. It had been maintained at Danyluk Motors in Glendale most of its years, and when Harold bought it in February, 1961, the car was in good original condition. Harold added some new chrome and paint, rebuilt the over-drive and gave it a minor tune-up.

The first Darrin cars were built on Sunset Blvd. in 1939. In 1940 they were built in Connorsville, Indiana, and in 1941 and 1942, in Cincinnati, Ohio, under the supervision of Darrin.

This car took first place in the primary late customs with 94.75 points in the 1961 Far Western Grand Classic. Some specifications are:

Bore and stroke: 3 1/2 x 4 5/8
 Engine diss: 356 inches
 Engine: straight "8"
 Tires: 700 x 16
 Wheel base: 127 inches
 Shift: standard with over-drive
 \$4595.00 f.o.b. factory

ESCAPE ROAD

1942 Packard Darrin Victoria

A dose of distinctive elegance for the fortunate few

By Michael G.H. Scott

Howard A. "Dutch" Darrin, one of the classic era's most prolific coach-builders, later in his career admitted that he and Thomas L. Hibbard, both born in 1898, had been only "two young kids in Paris" and hadn't expected their dramatic creations to last more than 10 years.

Raconteur Darrin would explain or sketch what he was after and craftsman Hibbard would execute it. They sold the custom cars out of a Paris Minerva agency and their trademark long, low, elegant look adorned the finest chassis from America, England and Europe: Hispano-Suiza, Isotta-Fraschini, Delage, Delahaye, Mercedes-Benz, Minerva, Rolls-Royce, Bentley, Duesenberg, Stutz and Packard.

Before Hibbard left in 1931 for the relative safety of GM's styling department, he and Darrin consulted for Citroen and Renault in France; Minerva in Belgium; Rolls-Royce, Armstrong-Siddeley and Barker in England; Mercedes-Benz in Germany; and Stutz and GM in America. Darrin then formed Fernandez & Darrin with a Parisian banker, selling the flowing, swoopy designs from "the most important showroom on the Champs Elysees," as Darrin recalled decades later. Returning to the States in 1937, Darrin opened a showroom on Los Angeles' Sunset Strip.

Increasing sophistication of the more affordable production cars (independent front suspension, higher compression, rubber mounting of engines), had reduced the performance gulf between these and traditional, expensive luxury cars. After re-bodying a Ford, Darrin settled on the Packard One-Twenty, the more popularly-priced model that kept Packard from going the way of Pierce-Arrow and other expensive stalwarts.

Producing semi-customs from the Packard One-Twenty was readily understandable. "Its chassis was unimpeachable, and its classic grille a great starting point," Darrin once remarked. While the chassis was unimpeachable, Darrin's first effort, a '37 120 roadster for actor-singer Dick Powell, was plagued with water leaks and too much body flex.

Darrin then hired a pair of auto body craftsmen, Paul Erdos and Rudi Stoessel. A Packard dealer in Texas gave Darrin a good

buy on stripped 1938 business coupes, which were driven to Los Angeles. There, Darrin's men cut off the roof, sectioned the body, angled the rear fenders and cut the rakish trademark Darrin dip in the doors.

With a sumptuous tuck-and-rolled interior, and frugal use of whatever caught Darrin's



"Dutch" Darrin worked semi-custom magic on Packard 120

eye—such as door handles from a Hudson Terraplane—the cars were what might later be called radical California customs.

The first of these '38 Darrin Victorias went to Clark Gable, who later sold it, supposedly because the cut-down doors allowed fans to mob him at traffic lights. In all, 16-18 1938-39 Victorias were built, including a few '39 Super Eights, which shared the 120's sheet metal and 127-inch wheelbase, with prices ranging from \$4,200 to \$5,300.

Darrin knew a little about promotion. His personal car, the fifth '38 built, was often driven by his friend, Gene Tierney, around Hollywood. The major problem was producing enough cars, leading Darrin to drive one to Detroit's Packard Proving Grounds dealer show, then blending into the crowd where he could gauge the car's acceptance.

The dealers loved it. And so the 1940 Packard catalogue carried the Darrin Victoria, which was hyped in full-page color ads in *Collier's*, *Fortune*, and *Country Life* as "Glamour Car of the Year." Darrin had demonstrated Rudi Stoessel's flex-reducing aluminum cowl to Packard president Alvan Macauley by jumping up and down on it.

There were about 40 1940 Victorias, evenly divided between the One-Twenty,

with its robust 282 cid inline L-head, and the new 356 cid nine-main Super Eight, which remained the industry's most powerful engine until Chrysler's Hemi V8 11 years later.

The cars were now produced closer to Detroit, in the former Auburn plant in Connorsville, Ind. To appreciate the handwork and markup, a stripped 120 business coupe FOB Detroit was \$1,038, a convertible coupe \$1,238, and the One-Twenty Darrin Victoria \$3,800—nearly \$1,000 more than the Lincoln Zephyr-based Continental debuting that year. The Super Eight Darrin Victoria was \$4,570, sharing the 120's frame and sheet metal.

Also in 1940, on the longer 138-inch wheelbase Super Eight-only chassis, there were at least five convertible sedans (a final sixth was sold as a '41) and a pair of Darrin sport sedans. These latter were most notable for predicting, in silhouette, the Darrin-derived Packard Clipper of 1941-47, one of the smoothest production sedans to date.

The 35 1941 and 15 1942 Darrin Victorias were all Super Eights built by hearse, ambulance and special bodycrafter Sayers & Scoville of Cincinnati and used more production parts, the '40 Darrins having been recalled for a reinforcing kit when the front fenders wiggled at speed because the heavy frame cross member had been replaced by a thin steel strip to lower the radiator. The already long 1941-42 hood was

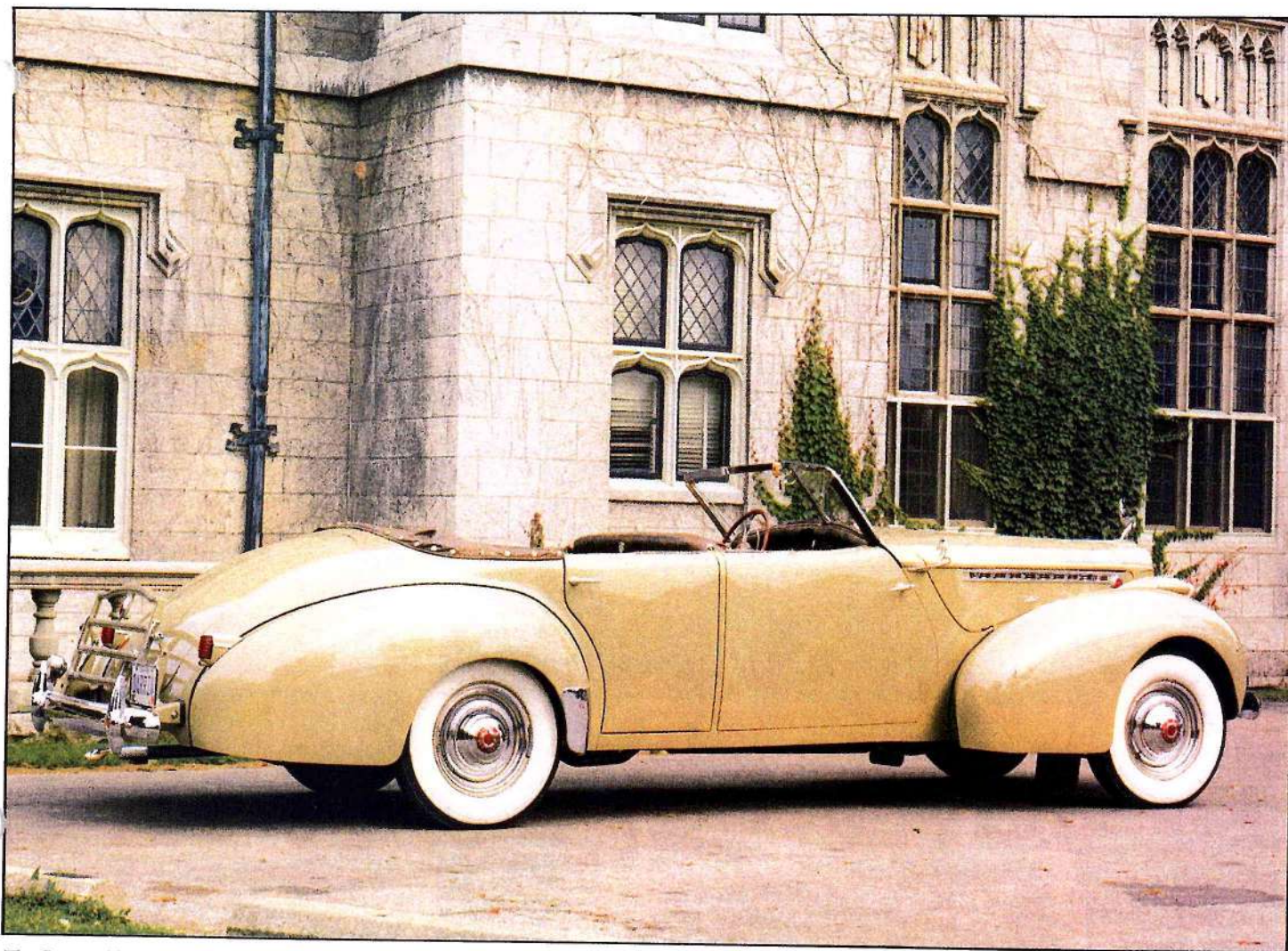
lengthened; it was more than 5.5 feet from the cast bronze windshield to the tall grille.

Gable, Al Jolson, Chester Morris, Rosalind Russell, the Donald Meeks—the list of Darrin owners included Hollywood royalty and playboys and girls from across the country, though wanting yet more distinction, Errol Flynn had Darrin produce a one-off Clipper convertible. Petar J. Jakovina, owner of Petar's Restaurant in the Lafayette hills east of San Francisco, owns the pictured '42 ebony beauty, one of the last built.

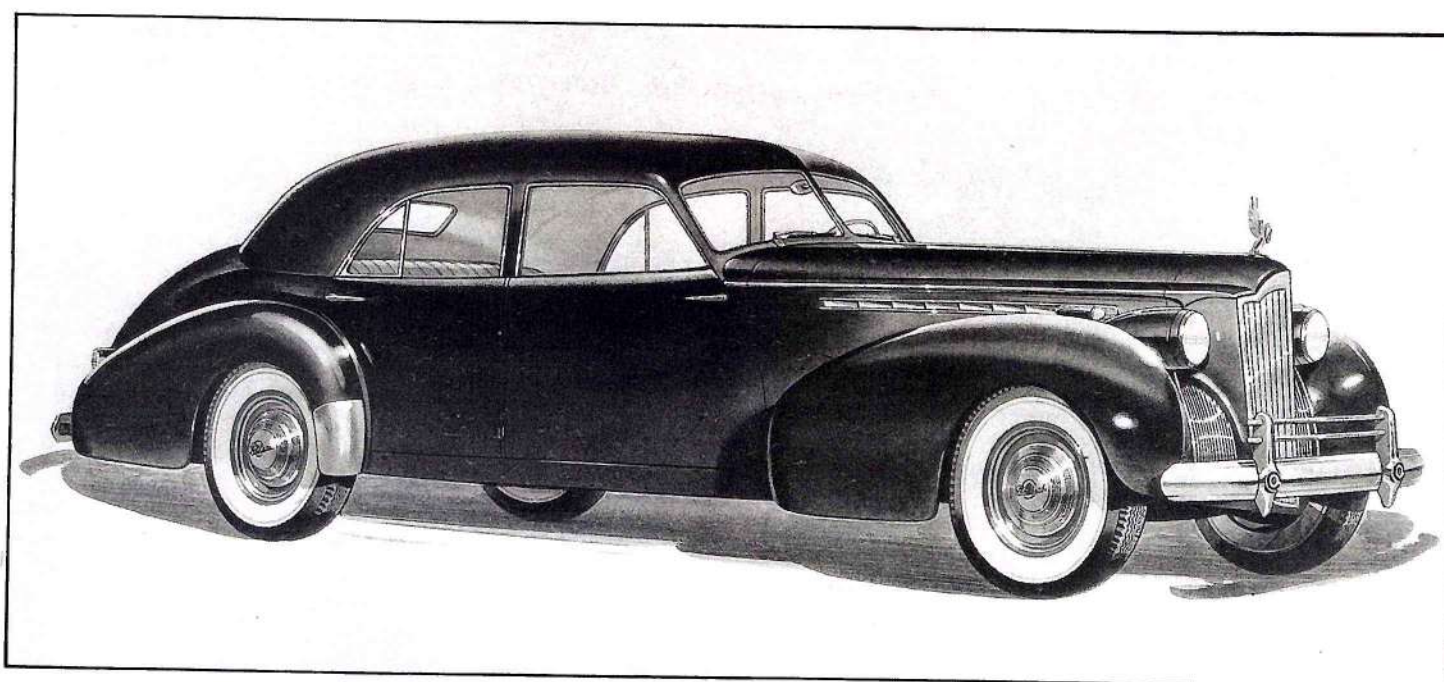
Though the Victorias led to Packard asking Darrin to style the new car that would become the Clipper, the firm never paid him for his consulting, promising instead to increase his Victoria order, only to later cancel it. That left Darrin soured on Packard management until his death in 1982 at age 84.

During WWII, Darrin led a group of horse-mounted cavalry which played a lot of polo as they kept an eye out for Japanese subs off the California coast. Darrin's lieutenant was a young actor named Ronald Reagan.

Darrin designed the postwar Kaiser and Frazer, the fiberglass Kaiser Darrin sports car with sliding doors produced in 1954, and a four-seat proposal for Packard in 1955 with a traditional grille and sliding doors. ■



The Convertible Sedan (above and opposite) was judged the best-looking of the three Packard Darrin models listed for 1940 by Packard authority Warren Fitzgerald. That's because it rode the long 138-inch wheelbase and sported a three-inch-longer hood, giving it stunning proportions. This car listed at a breathtaking \$6332, easily making it the most expensive '40 Packard. (Owner: Eugene Tareshawty) The '40 Sport Sedan (below) wasn't Dutch's favorite; reportedly only two were built.



producing svelte open four-seaters instead of square-edged Rollston limos or LeBaron town cars. Dutch, however, was determined to sell the Darrin to Packard as a catalogue offering. In 1938, he convinced the Detroit Packard dealer council to commission one for their annual show at the Packard Proving Grounds—the company's home turf. It was another safari into what Dutch always called "my adventures in the American automotive jungle."

"Art Fitzpatrick, who achieved fame as a commercial artist for Pontiac, was working for me at the time," Dutch wrote in *Automobile Quarterly* in 1972. "He and a friend drove day and night to get there in time. They ran into a drunken driver who smashed one whole side of the car." It was still driveable, so Darrin had his boys drive it (unauthorized) onto the Proving Grounds and park it off to one side with the undamaged side showing. "A great deal of enthusiasm was created," continued Dutch, but "Packard brass were furious and wouldn't speak to me for

awhile." At first the Company refused to catalogue Darrins, but dealers finally raised so much clamor that Packard chairman Alvan Macauley called on Dutch to talk things over on one of his trips to California.

When Macauley ventured that the Darrins had a reputation for body flex, Dutch leaped up on the cowl of the nearest example in his shop. "Get off," yelled Macauley, "you'll ruin it for sure!" Dutch just grinned at him, jumping up and down. Unbeknown to Macauley, it was one of those with Rudy Stoessel's cast aluminum cowl. "I asked if he thought it was strong enough. That was how I got Packard to approve the Darrin Victoria for production." It appeared for the first time in Packard's 1940 catalogue.

There were strings attached to this deal: one was Alvan Macauley's stipulation that most Darrins be built on the Super Eight chassis, this for prestige purposes. He said Dutch could turn out a handful on the One Twenty chassis—with a considerably reduced list price of \$3800, f.o.b.—but the majority had to be Super Eights. Packard

also specified two additional body styles, a Convertible Sedan and a four-door Sport Sedan.

The late Warren Fitzgerald, an eminent authority, held the Convertible Sedan the best design of the three: "It had the long 138-inch wheelbase, combined with the three-inch-longer hood, which made for stunning proportions." Dutch agreed with this view, but thought the Sport Sedan should not have been built at all: "It wasn't possible to alter it as dramatically as the open models." Yet it looks fabulous today, somewhat reminiscent of Bill Mitchell's pacesetter Cadillac Sixty Specials, but altogether sleeker, more flowing. A fourth type, never catalogued, was a magnificent Model 1806 (1940) Coupe de Ville, its elegant landau bars complementing the curve of Darrin's beltline. This car was built as an auto show special, but several others followed in 1941; at least one has survived.

The Super Eight Darrins were priced at \$4570 for the Convertible Victoria, around \$6100 for the Sport Sedan, and \$6300 for



Viewed from any angle, the '40 Packard Darrin Sport Sedan (top) looked distinctive, no matter what Darrin himself thought of that model. Like all Packard Darrins, it's been recognized as a Classic by the Classic Car Club of America. (Owner: Eugene Tareshawty) The '41 One Eighty Convertible Victoria (above) rode the 127-inch wheelbase and retailed for \$4595. The lack of running boards added to the sporty looks. (Owner: Maurice Wilson) A dark color is perfect for showing off the bright chrome trim of the '41 One Eighty Convertible Victoria (opposite): grille, side grilles, bumper, rear fender stone shields, windshield frame.

the Convertible Sedan—the latter two were more expensive than any other model in the 1940 catalogue by nearly \$2000. Even at these prices, demand would be brisk, however, and Darrin knew he'd need more cars than he could produce at Sunset Strip. So he arranged with Roy Faulkner, president of the almost defunct Auburn Motor Car Company, to produce 1940 Packard Darrins at the Auburn plant in Connersville, Indiana.

Production estimates vary. The Sport

Sedan was dropped after a reported two were built; figures of five Convertible Sedans and 40 Victorias are commonly quoted. New serial/body number analysis by Charles Blackman of the Packard Club, to be published this year, may alter these numbers. Whatever the actual figures, production was inevitably limited. Packard must have soon wished there were more to go around. Showroom floor traffic increased 300 percent when a Darrin was on display, and a dealer was allocated a Darrin only if he'd promise to keep it on the floor for a month whether it was sold or not.

Back in Hollywood, the creator of the product was promoting it with his usual flair: "One of the stunts we did was to leave one of the cars in front of Romanoff's where many of the Hollywood personalities had lunch. We'd bribe the doorman to keep an empty space right by the door, so anyone alighting couldn't help but notice it. We also got a lot of free publicity, and made a little side money by renting our cars to the studios for movies." Dutch was riding high: "I figured I'd hit the big time. Packard was the most prestigious luxury car manufacturer in the country, and they would certainly take every Darrin I could hand them. We were soon hopelessly backlogged and I went to Detroit looking for more production facilities."

Dutch was unable to arrange any production in Detroit, and Auburn closed its automotive division at the end of 1940. Darrin then transferred the operation to the hearse and flower car builder Sayers and Scoville in Cincinnati, Ohio. "Their directors were all on hand to watch the first 1941 Packard Darrin come off the line—followed closely by a hearse!" Dutch said. "It was quite a sight." Quoted production figures for the Cincinnati Darrins, all Super Eight Convertible Victorias, were 35 for 1941 and 15 for 1942. A Sport Sedan was catalogued for 1941, but there is no record of any production. In design, the Cincinnati cars followed established Darrin lines, with trim shuffles to coincide with model year facelifts: fender-top parking lights for 1941, low horizontal flanking grilles on each side of the main grille for 1942.

Some Packard followers have wondered why the company itself never took on Darrin production. There are many good reasons, the primary one being the transfer of Packard body production from its own Grand Boulevard plant to Briggs commencing in 1940. Other factors included the strong emphasis on medium-

and low-medium priced models by 1940, and the relatively limited market for Darrins; had Packard made the cars available in unlimited quantity, buyers for such esoteric models would have eventually petered out because there simply weren't that many to go around, even with the Depression ending. Finally, Packard never entirely got over its doubt about the structural rigidity of the Darrin, Rudy Stoessel's aluminum cowls notwithstanding. P.S. de Beaumont, a prewar Packard engineer, said the company actually produced kits to improve front-end strength, because Dutch had removed the radiator cradle to lower the grille. The Darrins looked fantastic, management may have reasoned, but they still weren't up to Packard body standards.

World War II and the advent of the envelope-body Clipper brought the final end to Packard Darrin production. (A double irony: Dutch claimed that he largely designed the Clipper, but that Packard never paid him for it.) Darrin stopped playing with cars and went off to help train pilots for the air war, continuing to associate with exalted figures, notably flier/industrialist Howard Hughes. At war's end, he went back to body building, and played a major role in both design generations of Kaiser-Frazer, contributed to the Jeep Wagoneer, and ran off stillborn proposals for Crosley, DKW, Ilion of Israel, and Kaiser-Argentina. One of his last projects was a Darrin version of the Rolls-Royce Silver Shadow, in which he

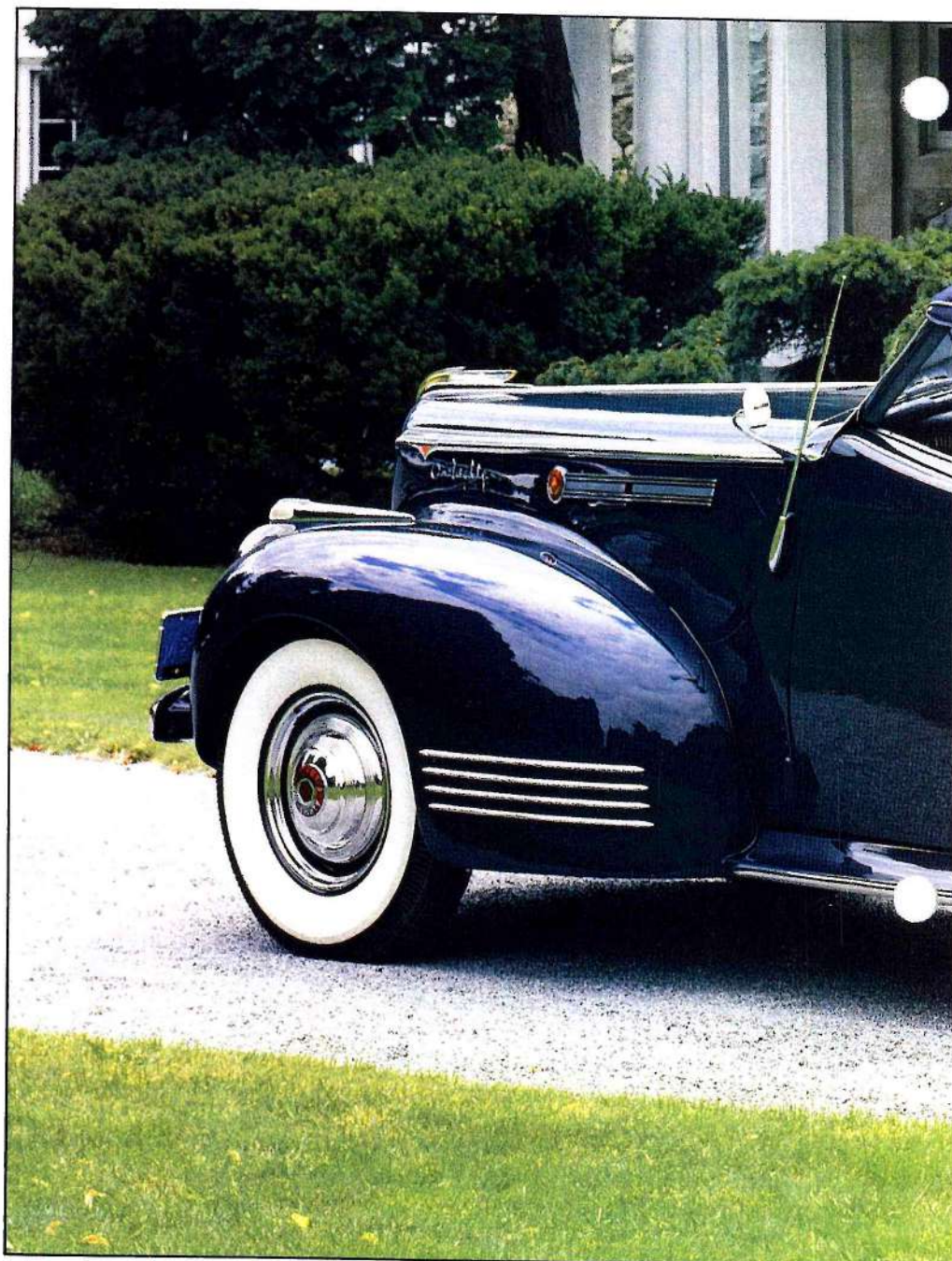
Clubs for Packard Darrin Partisans

The Packard Club—
Packard Automobile Classics, Inc.
P.O. Box 2808
Oakland, CA 94618
Telephone: (908) 738-7859

Packards International
Motor Car Club, Inc.
302 French Street
Santa Ana, CA 92701
Telephone: (714) 541-8431

The Eastern Packard Club, Inc.
P.O. Box 153
Fairfield, CT 06430
Telephone: (203) 259-9371

Packard Data Bank
Dr. Robert B. Marvin
Route 3, Box 425
Jasper, FL 32052
Telephone: (904) 792-2480

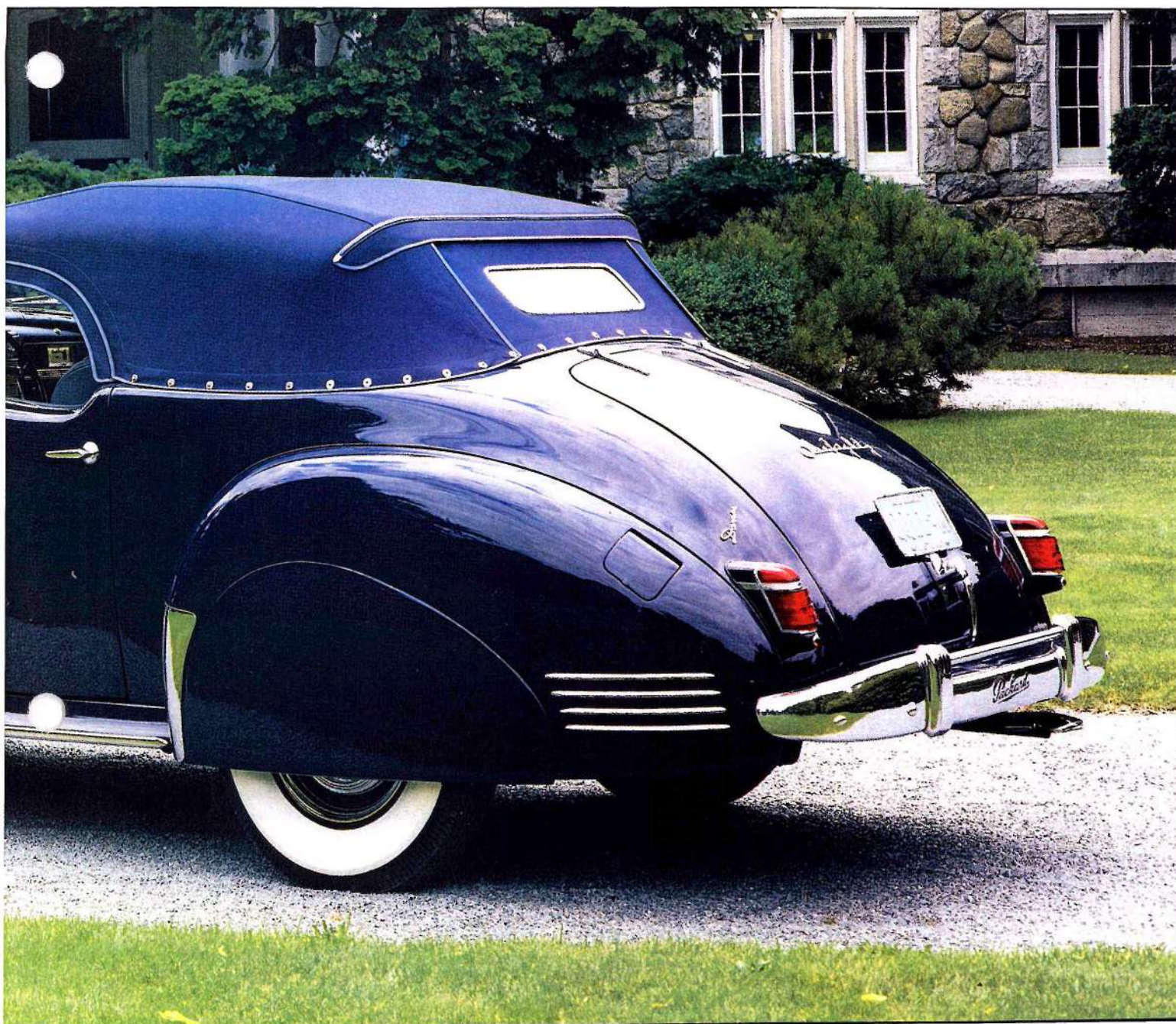


transformed a boxy, Volvo-like affair into a curvaceous sedan along familiar lines, with his patented beltline dip and jutting, rounded fenders. He never worked again for Packard, though he did conceive an intriguing four-seat convertible with two-way sliding doors allowing entry to the front or rear compartment. The idea was utterly impractical, but it featured one of the most beautiful modern adaptations of the traditional Packard grille ever conceived.

For a long period in the Seventies I had the opportunity to work closely with Dutch Darrin, ghosting his 1972 memoirs in *Automobile Quarterly* and interviewing him extensively for my book on Kaiser-Frazer. He had very firm ideas about how

such projects should be handled. He sailed confidently forward, and once arrived in his port of conclusion, no attack by land or sea was sufficient to dislodge him. He was a great joker and a wonderful needler, but there was a serious side to him too, and nobody was more loyal to a friend.

If there was one quality which set Dutch off from most comparable automotive figures, it was his characteristic way of standing back and looking at himself, as he believed history would: "How will I look if I do this or that?" Or: "What must I do now so that the verdict of history will be favorable?" Like Churchill, he was always searching for finest hours, and if one was not immediately available, his



impulse was to create one.

He was, of course, above all, supremely fortunate. Time and again, as with the immortal Packard Darrins, history placed him in a role that he was ideally qualified to fill. I cannot think of anybody in his field who was favored so much by fate. Dutch was superbly lucky. And perhaps the warmest thing about him was that he never ceased to say so—as for example in 1972: “Whoever thought that a dumb kid like me would fall into a strawberry patch?”

Among the many car collectors who knew him in his later years, each recalls some little incident—many of us, as in my own case, a kind action graced with the courtesy of past generations, going far

beyond the normal calls of polite communication. Each of us has his own memory, for in the wealth of the tributes Dutch received at his death all of us at least know the epitaph he would have chosen himself: “He was a good automobile man.”

Sources & Bibliography

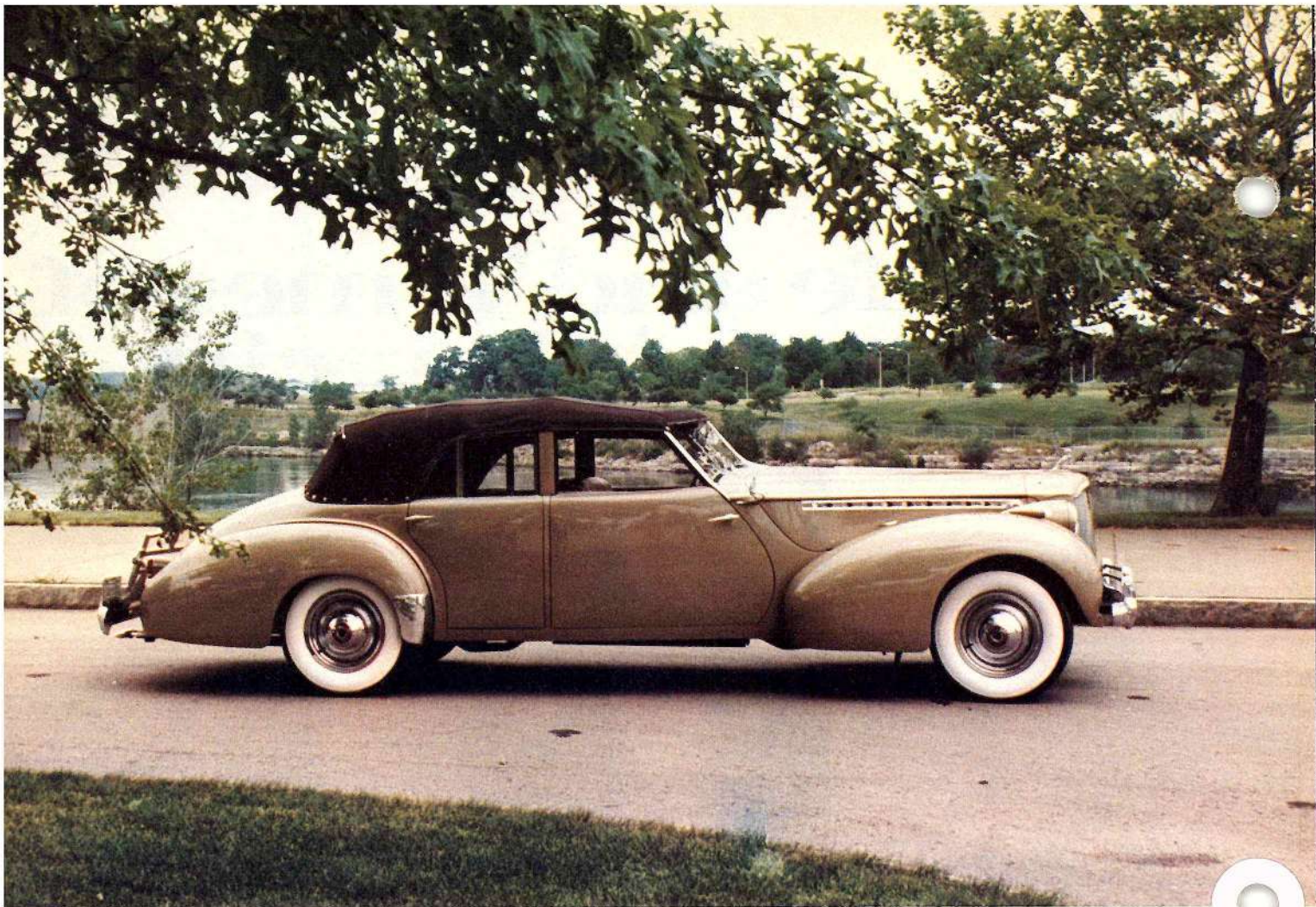
The author wishes to acknowledge numerous letters from and conversations with the late Howard A. Darrin, 1968-80; interviews with Alex Tremulis, Bud Crisinger, Brooks Stevens, and Duncan McRae; and the aid of Charles Blackman, George Hamlin, and Bob Zimmerman.

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The '42 Packard Darrin was virtually identical to the '41 Convertible Victoria shown here. Note the quadruple speedlines on the front and rear fenders, the meticulous detailing on the top, and the Darrin script above the left taillight. (Owner: Ralph Marano)



Three more Darrins from the collection of Eugene W. Tareshawty, Sr., of Youngstown, Ohio: (top) a 1940 Packard 1807 (One Eighty) convertible sedan, one of nine known to exist; (lower left) a 1940 Packard 1801 (One Twenty) convertible victoria; and (lower right) a 1940 Packard 1806 (One Eighty) convertible victoria. Tareshawty has the world's finest collection of Packard Darrins.

four times at the marquee while flash-bulbs popped. When Packard advertised the 1941 Clipper as the work of "three international designers," Darrin's reaction was characteristic: "I was the *only* international designer who was even let into the factory at that time, so you might construe their statement to mean that I was the *equal* of three designers!" In 1952, he insisted on having the chrome "Darrin Styled" nameplates removed from Kaisers, because he didn't approve of the facelift, although this was one of the few cars ever to carry its designer's name.

Darrin's first connection with Amer-

ican production designs was in the early '30s, when Paul Hoffman asked him to consult with Studebaker. Hide-bound South Bend prejudices forbade anyone who called himself a "stylist" to enter this domain, so Hoffman introduced him around the plant as "Mr. Loomis." Dutch told the writer he had influenced the mid-'30s Studebaker's shift from foursquare styling to mildly streamlined forms, just before the Loewy contract. If he did, he never got his name on a Stude. But Loewy, Darrin said, "was always jealous about my having my name on Kaisers."

On a 1936 visit to the US, Darrin

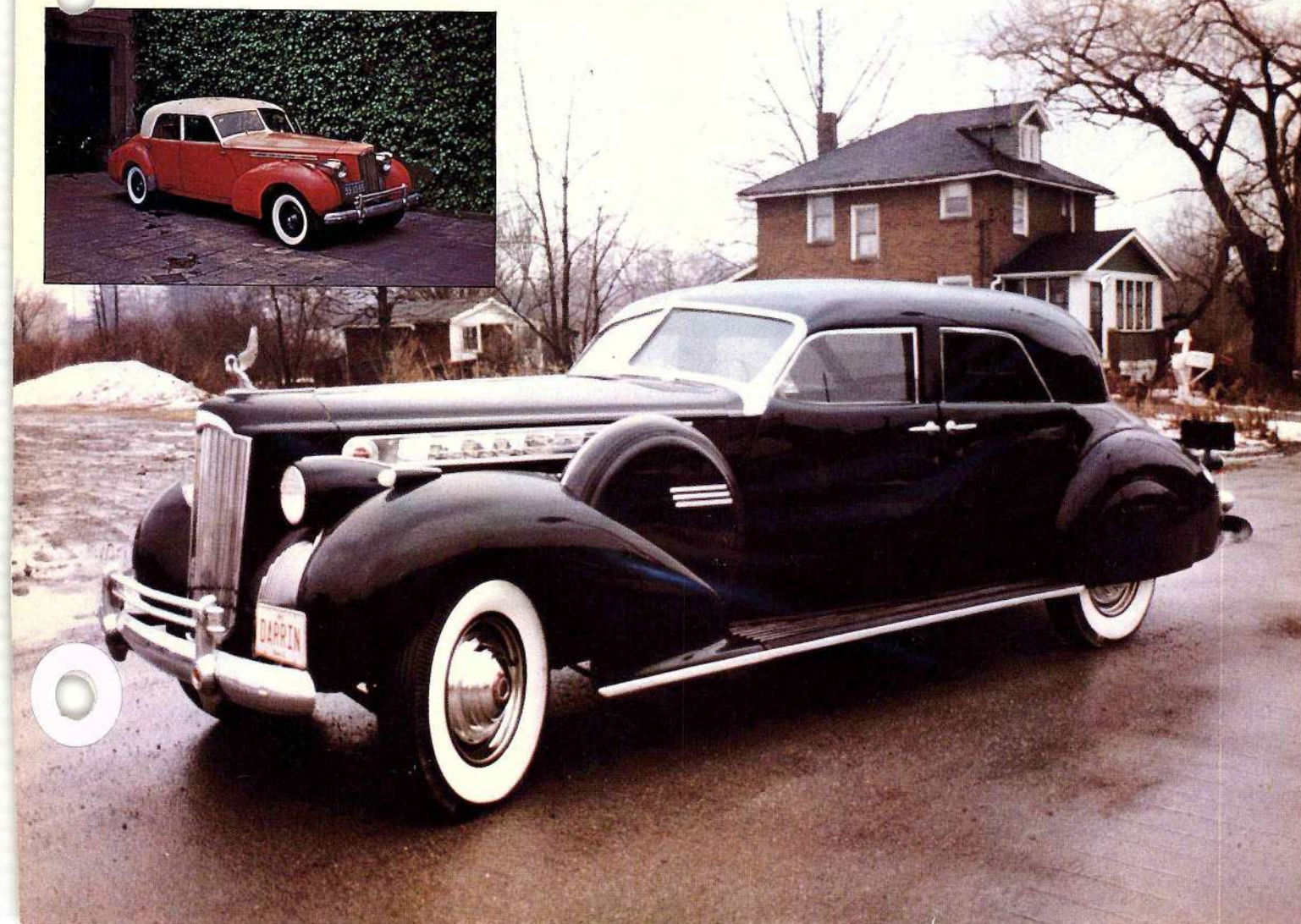
bought a Cord 810, which he credited as an influence on his move back to America. Gordon Buehrig "had fostered a masterpiece with that car," Darrin said. "As a strong 'radiator man,' with great dependence on grilles to enhance my own body design, I must say I was impressed." The strongest influence on Darrin's move to the US was film producer Darryl Zanuck, who he met on a polo field in Paris, and who brought Darrin out to Hollywood. "We had so much fun in California that I couldn't resist," Darrin said. "The handwriting was on the wall in the custom body business by then—in fact

The Life and Times of Howard A. Darrin



Howard A. "Dutch" Darrin

(Inset) Charles Blackman's 1940 Packard Model 1807 (One Eighty) Darrin sport sedan, photographed in Mexico in 1960. (large photo) Gene Tareshawty's variation of the same car. Note center-opening doors on the dark green car. Between three and six Darrin sedans were built.





Two craftsmen are busily engaged in turning a Packard business coupe "duckling" into a swan in this 1938 scene in Dutch's Sunset Strip shop.



Dutch, (L) with Joe Frazer and Bill Stout (R) in the early days of Graham-Paige. Frazer rejected a Stout-designed Scarab-type proposal.



Fiberglass shell for one of Darrin's K-F econo-car proposals with Dunc McRae "driving," Dutch in the front seat, K-F's Zimmerly and Lindbergh in the back. Similar design was later proposed to Crosley.



The Darrin as Dutch wanted to build it. The lower headlights and lack of "bananas" on the bumpers are the main changes from the production car.



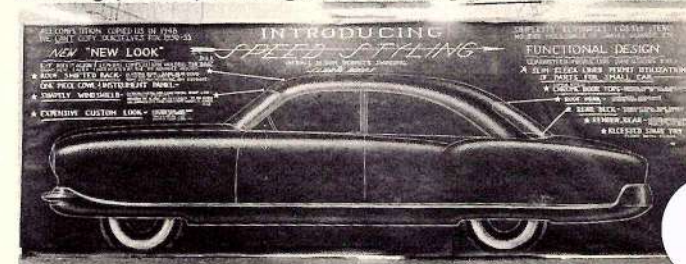
Most 1941 Clipper lines were by Darrin, but not the bulge along the rocker panels. This sedan is on test at the Packard Proving Ground.



Joseph Washington Frazer (right) and a Kaiser-Frazer dealer admire the original Darrin proposal for the 1947 Kaiser-Frazer line of automobile.



Dutch hated this shot because it shows all his rivals with the '51 Kaiser. L to R: clay modeler, Robillard, Trombley, Grizinger, Daniels, Spencer, Lindbergh, Darrin, Weissinger. K-F won trophy at a French show.



"Where did you get this photo?" Darrin asked when he saw it in 1972. "It is very historic." This is the original side elevation proposal for the 1951 Kaiser, a close copy of which eventually made it to production.

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Three of Dutch Darrin's greatest postwar designs: (top) the 1946 Packard Custom Super Clipper owned by Jeffrey Paley and photographed by Neil Perry; (lower left) the 1951 Kaiser Golden Dragon owned by Harold Pfanschmidt and shot by Richard Langworth; and (lower right) a 1954 Kaiser Darrin with Darrin-styled hardtop owned by Ted Dahlman and photographed by Bud Juneau.

it had just about knocked down the wall."

In America, Darrin designed some great customs, the most notable of which was Countess Dorothy di Frasso's Rolls-Royce town car. Still, he realized that his future lay in semi-production cars. Though his first American semi-custom was on a Ford chassis, his main target was Packard: "Its chassis was unimpeachable — and its classic grille was a great starting point." The first Packard-Darrin was built in late 1937 on a 1938 Eight chassis for Dick Powell, and made Dutch known to the Hollywood film crowd, many of whom

became his patrons. But as Clark Gable said, that car "looks better the farther you get away from it." It had more flex than a Studebaker hardtop, and it leaked a small torrent. Darrin had assembled this and other early cars in makeshift Los Angeles garages; now he hired two craftsmen, Paul Erdos and Rudolph Stoessel, and rented a good-sized building on the Sunset Strip.

"Darrin of Paris," read the new sign on the old bottle factory. Because he couldn't afford to replace the building's broken plate glass windows, Darrin knocked out the shards and installed a plywood backdrop behind the opening.

This allowed him to display cars in the open, and let customers walk right up from the sidewalk. It was clever, cheap, and caused a stir.

Darrin chose the Packard Eight or One Twenty instead of senior Packards for his modifications because it was cheaper and easier to alter. Starting with the basic business coupe, Dutch sliced off the roof, sectioned the body three inches, tilted the rear fenders upward, cut a rakish dip in the door beltline, and fashioned a convertible top. To cure the flex problems of the prototype, Rudy Stoessel designed a cast aluminum cowl. "The characteristic



Rough mock-up of the four-seat Darrin. Note two-way sliding doors allow access to front or back seat.

scrap about inconsequential. The 1951 Frazer was a mere last-ditch effort to move out leftover old style bodies, and was not worth resigning over. Said Buzz Grisinger, another K-F stylist: "Dutch could have done so much more for the company. But his arrangement was a royalty per car, and this made him uncompromising, even to the cost of the end product." His unyielding opposition to anything or anybody that was not 100 percent in line with his own ideas was Darrin's fatal flaw.

Back home in California, unattended by engineers or rival stylists, Dutch determined to build a car without compromises. Unfortunately, he chose the Henry J chassis, which was compromise

number one, though the body he created is perhaps his greatest postwar design. He did manage to sell it to Henry Kaiser, who produced it as the 1954 Kaiser Darrin DKF-161, using an ohv Willys engine instead of the L-head Henry J's. Daring and unique, the fiberglass roadster with sliding doors and swoopy lines was a great looking automobile. But it was underpowered — more boulevard tourer than sports car. Kaiser by that time was fast winding down, and only 435 units were built. After Darrin production ceased, Dutch bought some leftover models, fitted some with superchargers or Cadillac V-8's, and sold them from his Sunset Strip showroom. But this was strictly a

Darrin's Sunset Strip showroom, a converted bottle factory with KD-161 on display, circa 1956. Note the misspelling of Duesenberg and use of term "sport cars" instead of "sports cars."



rearguard action.

Inevitably, Dutch had argued with its builder over the production Darrin. In order to raise the headlamps to the legal-minimum height, K-F raised the front of the car and built up the fenders. At the time Darrin was scandalized, but in later years he wrote the problem off on the grounds that "the springs have weakened and the front end has settled." Car collectors who had never seen the prototype were telling him that the production car was great. And who was Dutch to argue?

Had it been built by a stronger company, the Darrin might have sold better, and even evolved into a four seater. K-F styling rendered a few such designs, and Dutch himself produced a Darrin-based four-seater in 1955. The sliding doors on this car slid *both ways*, allowing access to either the front or rear seat. Dutch tried the idea out with Packard, incorporating a beautiful revival of the Packard radiator shape, but that company was in no better shape than Kaiser, and another bright idea came to naught.

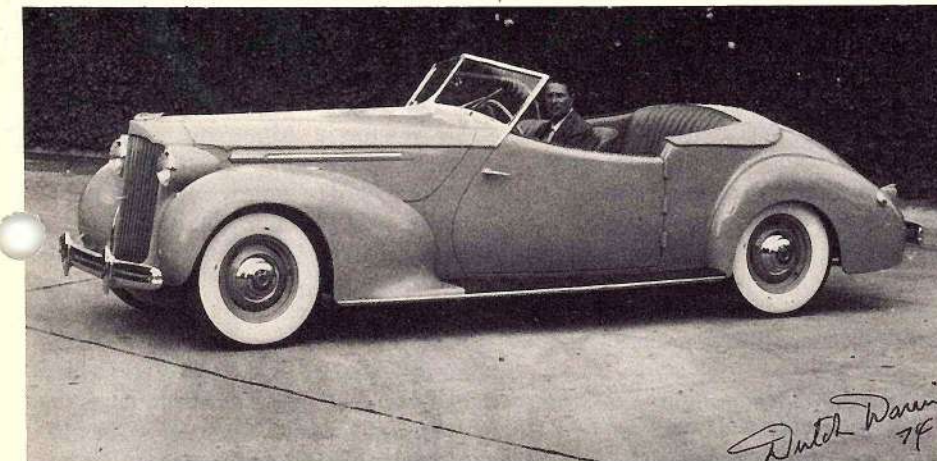
During the late '50s Dutch restyled a DKW for a Montrose, California, dealer, improving its looks (which weren't hard to improve upon). He also rebodied a Panhard, and facelifted a fleet of Buick-Olds-Pontiac compacts for a rental agency in 1962. For the Israeli company, Illian, he designed a beautifully curvaceous sports sedan; for Industrias Kaiser Argentina, which had been building the '54 model as the "Kaiser Carabela" since 1958, he proposed a unique cowl-forward modernization. The low, sloping hood and simple radiator opening Darrin envisioned would have nicely updated the Carabela, which by then was a 12-year-old design. But IKA dropped the car without further change after 1962.

If he was so good, why didn't Darrin ever establish himself with one of the Big Three? By temperament Dutch was unable to accept committee decisions, and considered chains of command anathema. More promising to him were one-man consultant contracts with smaller companies who lacked large or well-organized styling departments. His only Big Three contact was at GM in the '20s, but he quarreled with Harley Earl over the 1929 Buick, and left quickly. "If I had continued with General Motors I am afraid would have at best become an assistant to the assistant to the vice-president of design," he wrote — "truly a fate worse than death."

feature of all subsequent Sunset Strip Packard Darrins was a four-inch sill at the bottom of the doors," wrote the late Warren Fitzgerald. Altogether 16-18 cars were built in 1938-39, priced at \$4200 to \$5300 complete. Two or three were built on Super Eight chassis, but Darrin preferred that of the One Twenty.

Dutch soon decided he wished to work less and earn more. The way to do this, he concluded, was to let Packard build Darrins for him. Thus occurred the famous Proving Grounds *coup d'état*, when Dutch sent an unauthorized Darrin to the annual dealer show. Enroute, one side of the car was wiped out by an errant drunk, and when Dutch's man called in a panic Darrin told him, "Drive it out anyway — park it with the good side showing."

To the consternation of management, this California custom stole the show. After Dutch proved the cowl's strength



Dutch at the wheel of a '38 One Twenty reportedly built for actor Chester Morris aka Boston Blackie.

by jumping up and down on it (to a horrified Alvan Macauley), the Darrin was put into the 1940 Packard catalog. Dutch contracted with the idle Auburn plant in Connersville, Indiana, to build the cars, though Macauley insisted that the Super Eight chassis be used for prestige purposes. Connersville turned out at least fifteen '40 Darrins on One Twenty chassis, but these were the last of the original type.

The three "catalog" Darrins for 1940 were the convertible-victoria, convertible sedan, and four-door sport sedan. Warren Fitzgerald, a worthy authority, held the convertible sedan among the best of that style ever built: "...the long 38-inch wheelbase, combined with the three-inch-longer hood, made for stunning proportions."

The sport sedan was dropped from the catalog after no less than three were

finished. No one, including Fitzgerald, seemed to think much of it. Darrin said the sedan shouldn't have been built at all, since it was difficult to lower the beltline as in the open models. (Some had dipped beltlines, others straight.) Still, photos reveal a most striking car, its mid-section reminiscent of the pace-setting 1938 Cadillac 60 Special designed by young Bill Mitchell. Production in 1940 included at least a dozen convertible sedans, 44 or 45 One Eighty convertible victorias, plus the previously mentioned sports sedans and One Twenty convertible victorias, a total of not less than 75 Darrins.

Darrins continued to be built at the Sayers & Scoville commercial body works in Cincinnati, for 1941 and 1942. All but one (a single 1941 sports sedan) were victorias, and they were more "production" cars than semi-customs. Respectively, about 36 and 15 were built for the two years.

To this day controversy rages about the Darrin Packard's structural rigidity. Dutch, of course, insisted that all his regular models (with aluminum cowl) were rock-solid. P.S. deBeaumont, a prewar Packard engineer, reported that the company had to produce kits to improve the strength of the cars up front, where Dutch had removed the radiator cradle to lower the grille.

At the height of his association with Packard, Dutch Darrin was asked to supply designs for a new production car — the 1941 Clipper. Much of the Clipper's lines were owed to Dutch, although he was unhappy with the final shape. Packard's Werner Gubitz, he said, "vandalized the design by throwing on huge gobs of clay along the wheelbase. The Clipper never recovered." Yet the Clipper was a great recovery for Packard styling, which

had begun to look pretty long in the tooth by 1940.

Dutch Darrin continued holding forth at Sunset Strip after the war, customizing Lincolns, Royces, and Cadillacs. For Graham-Paige, and later Kaiser-Frazer, he furnished the original design for their production 1947 models. But here again Darrin left mad after production engineers eliminated the fenderline "dip" and raised the cars' proportions. He insisted that K-F remove the little "Darrin-styled" badges on the 1947 models — and would do so again, in 1952. "That was a mistake," he told the writer later. "Never take your name off anything."

An early proponent of fiberglass bodywork, Dutch built a unique convertible prototype in 1945 with a host of hydraulic-power accessories — convertible top, side window, doors, seats and jacking system. He thought he could sell 30,000 a year at \$1950 a piece, lined up Hayes Manufacturing in Grand Rapids to do the assembly and Lehman Brothers in New York to finance the project. But fiberglass was in its infancy, and curing problems were rampant. The project died on the vine. Later Dutch wryly said, "Disaster is my business."

Darrin's long and oftentimes bitter career at Kaiser-Frazer is well known. After walking out over the 1947s, he returned in 1948 to design the 1951 Kaiser. He approved of the final production version — but only barely, since the engineers had made some changes again. When H.J. Kaiser wanted an economy car, Darrin proposed a short-wheelbase Kaiser sharing many body pressings with the standard size model, but H.J. settled for a toad of a design proposed by a manufacturer of car seats. Darrin lowered the beltline and jazzed up the front end, but the Henry J was not a pretty face, and he claimed no credit for it.

Darrin's last K-F contribution was the teardrop taillight of the 1952 Kaiser, which he had just completed when he stormed out of Willow Run for the final time. Dutch had proposed a facelift for the 1951 Frazer, involving his "trade-mark" dip on the rear doors. K-F's Herb Weissinger instantly used this idea, but applied the "dip" to the rear fenders to save tooling expenses. Darrin was livid about not being consulted, "I was distressed that they used my lines with hardly any change," he said, "without warning and overnight."

Dutch was a scrapper, make no mistake. Alas, too often he chose to

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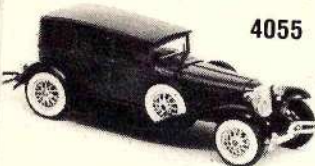
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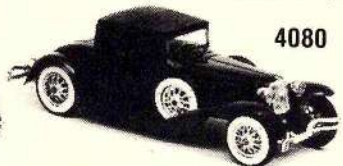
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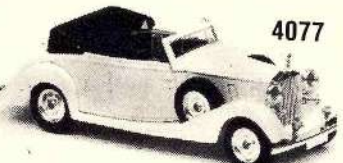
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- 4055 - Cord L-29 1930 FWD limousine
- 4080 - Cord L-29 1930 FWD roadster
- 4067 - Mercedes 540K, 1939 convertible
- 4071 - Rolls Royce Ph. III 1939 Coupe d'Ville
- 4046 - Rolls Royce 1939 convertible, top up Ph. III
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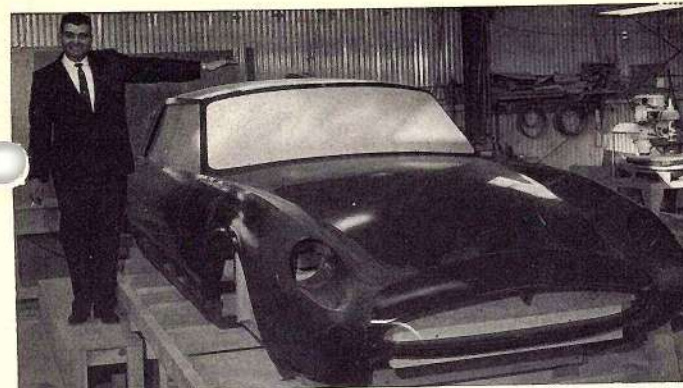
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This clay model, a proposal by Darrin, was constructed for Illian Motors of Haifa, Israel. The dies are allegedly still reposing in Haifa.



A sketch by Darrin proposing a cowl-forward facelift of the 1954 Kaiser for Industrias Kaiser Argentina's Carabela, 1962.

Nearing 70, Dutch began to ease back on the throttle he had held firmly to the floor for half a century. There were times when the old spark returned, as in 1970 when he designed a custom Rolls-Royce for dealer Peter Zage — proving that a Silver Shadow can be made to look elegant despite itself. Nearing 80 he remained as spirited and opinionated as ever. He liked nothing better than to be made a fuss over, and the car buffs obliged, holding "Darrin Days" where admirers would nod knowingly at the famous chutzpah which had once made Dutch the toast of Hollywood, the bane of Detroit.

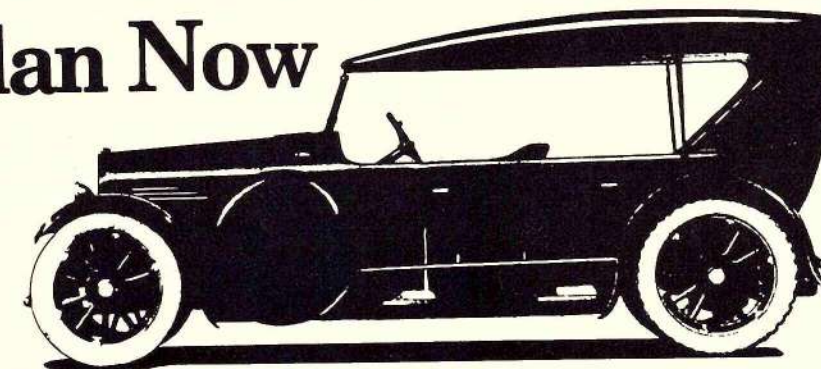
His was a grand career. Nobody else could claim one quite like it. Dutch was a spellbinder to those who knew him in the '70s; he must have been devastating in the '40s and '50s. This was obvious all the way up to those last sad years, when a lingering emphysema began to chip away at the granite until the dust was at last ready to return to the dust.

In some ways he reminded me of Churchill. Though not as learned nor eloquent, and certainly no politician, he was possessed with the same self-assurance — the same capability for a withering blast at his opponents. We may be sure that Dutch enjoyed his rich

life immensely, and that he would subscribe to Sir Winston's own summation: "I was happy as a child with the toys in my nursery. I have been happier each year since I became a man." **

Primary sources: Howard A. Darrin, Raymond H. Dietrich, A.B. Grisinger, Tom Hibbard, Duncan McRae, Alex Tremulis, Herb Weissinger. Secondary sources: Car Life, July 1967; Automobile Quarterly Vol. VII No. 1, Vol. X No. 1; "Last Onslaught on Detroit," Dutton, 1975; "Packard: A History of the Motorcar and the Company" by Martin, Bradley et al, Dutton, 1978.

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THE LAST PRE-WAR PACKARDS: 1942

by Edward J. Blend

December 7, 1941, created not only a worldwide stir politically, geographically, and economically, but also manifested itself in the types of greed with which Americans had never before been associated.

One incident in early 1942 still stands out in my mind. One morning I ventured out to see how the small game had fared after a heavy frost and to determine if there were going to be many pheasants for next year's hunting season. Above home, an abandoned World War I strip mine offered all types of shelter for small game and one area where it filled with water held something quite different that morning. There were six new 1942 Plymouths, all sitting on their brake drums with trunk lids akimbo. Knowledgeable thieves had stripped 24 tires and looked to see if any spares may have been in place (since spares weren't allowed—remember?)

Automobile and tire rationing was something new, and many Packards, as well as other makes, unless specifically ordered and in the making, went into large regional pools, where they were allocated after considerable red tape and investigations into the intent of the buyers. The Clipper series cars were, as many readers remember, an instant hit after introduction, and the factory could never seem to purchase enough parts or to deliver cars quickly enough since it had also become increasingly difficult to acquire sheet steel for body construction. Older stockpiled roofs and doors from the 1940-1941 configuration cars were available, but Packard

buyers were enamored by the Clipper styling and they wanted the new styled version, not the old classic style 110s or 180s. To fill a niche for the staid, old line traditionalist, the Company still offered in their 2007-8 series that comfortable recognizable niche for this exclusive group. The other instant hit back in October 1939 was the new Darrin Victoria, built largely from purloined parts from the conservative two-passenger business coupe mounted on the 160 and 180 chassis. Many of the very first Darrins were mounted on the tough 120 series chassis.

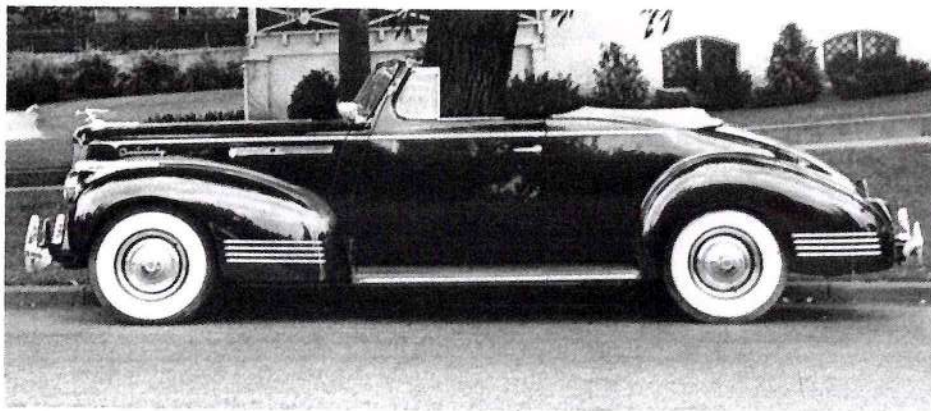
Howard Darrin, upon returning to America from Paris, had created quite a stir with his avant garde "Darrin of Paris" Packard convertibles. It was evident to farsighted Packard executives in merchandising that they had better avail themselves of the services of Darrin's advanced styling. Quickly Darrin was commissioned to build his convertible Victoria, a 4-door sedan, and a convertible sedan. After a successful introduction of these customs, the Company put Darrin on a retainer as a consultant so that he could present new ideas for the now stodgy production cars. The end result was a clay mockup that suffered through committee deliberations and emerged as the now famous Packard Clipper series. By smoothing over and reducing high cost areas to fit mass production standards, there came about a new style that still said "Packard." Some of these changes alarmed Darrin, but he was only the consultant in their eyes at this time. An instant hit, it

almost caught management by surprise with its public acceptance. Dad was selling these cars at the time and was disturbed because back ordering kept occurring on cars that the public was clamouring for. Production never did catch up with demand, since Packard ever so slowly was deprived of sheet steel from its suppliers. Then there was the turnaround from civilian production to the inevitable war to come.

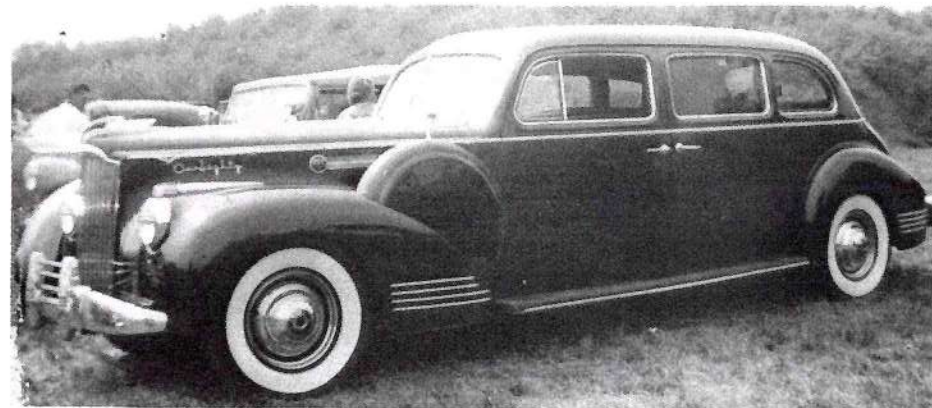
By 1942 Packard had abandoned the hand building that Dutch Darrin had initiated and had arranged for facilities at Connersville, Ind., with more production capability and better control over body building. The earlier 1940 cars did exhibit certain hangups in continued door alignment and body twisting. Many Darrin enthusiasts have expressed their dislike for the 1941-42 Darrins because of the peculiar little body jump up behind the door. In order to alleviate as far as possible any contingent body warranty problems, Packard engineers beefed up the hanging or hinging area, where there were decided weaknesses in the earlier Darrin-built bodies. With slight body stretching here and there, the 1941-42 Darrin Victoria is a slightly larger and better built automobile, but I would agree it is not as lithesome as Dutch's original semi-custom creation.

Many Packard Clippers were purchased by the Army and Navy, and if rank deemed it necessary, especially if you were a Colonel or a Brigadier or above in rank, it seems one could manage to have a Packard staff car, especially around Washington, DC or Fort Knox, Ky. I remember our Colonel, while attached to the 15th headquarters of the Fourth Army in 1944, who managed to buy a Packard Clipper Club Sedan when it seems no one else could get a new car!

Those few existing 1942 Packard cars did receive excellent dealer care up until V-J Day; then all hell broke loose with relaxed speed limits and escalating prices. I recall a 1942 metallic green 160 convertible coupe with six wheels that I tried to buy in 1946. O.P.A. price limit at the time was less than \$1000, but I know it changed hands for \$700 more under the table—a common practice then, as many of us will remember.



1941 Packard 120 convertible coupe, series 1901, style #1499. Sold for only \$1407 in June 1941. The 160 series of 1942 was the same automobile with a larger engine and finer appointments.



Avant garde styling of the new Packard Clipper rendered the Custom 180 styling obsolete. Many enthusiasts agree that the style would have still sold in 1946 after some styling updating; unfortunately, however, President Roosevelt induced the factory to turn the dies over to the Russians in an as yet unrevealed deal.

Taking the time to outline those special last Packards, I thought maybe I could help potential buyers identify senior series cars. I must apologize to the lesser series enthusiast because my interest almost always in the past is with the classic or neo-classic Packard. Therefore, I have more information on those than on the junior series cars.

By 1942 the motor numbers on all Packards were to be found on a cast bar on the upper left front side of the motor block. For the benefit of those searchers and seekers who desire this particular marque, the following numbers will help determine if you have found a Classic Packard that was available in only 11 production configurations. Almost all Packards are identified by body style numbers and sometimes by series numbers stamped onto appropriate areas of a brass serial plate mounted on the inside or motor side of the firewall. Unfortunately Packard also used a decal on some cars, which makes identity even more difficult. Let us say we have found a serial plate with 2006 affixed. This series is classic and if it further says 1522 or 1525 and is preceded by one to three digits, it would be the classic Clipper 2006 Series. 1525-12 means a Super Custom Eight Club Sedan and it would have been the 12th unit produced, perhaps a show or introduction model.

And as Table 1 states, any 1942 Clipper with 1522 or 1525 affixed to the serial plate is also recognized as classic by the CCCA and AACA.

Many discrepancies are found when analyzing old

TABLE 1

	Style #	Wheelbase		Body Type
2006	1522	127"	By Packard	Clipper Touring Sedan
	1525	127"	By Packard	Clipper Club Sedan
	1529	127"	Darrin	Victoria Convertible
2007	897	138"	Rollson	All Weather Cabriolet
	1532	138"	Leather Pad	Formal Sedan
	1542	138"	By Packard	Touring Sedan
2008	895	148"	Rollson	All Weather Town Car
	1520	148"	LeBaron	Touring Limousine
	1521	148"	LeBaron	Touring Sedan
	1550	148"	By Packard	Touring Limousine
	1551	148"	By Packard	Touring Sedan
2004	1562	127"	By Packard	Touring Sedan
2005	1570	148"	By Packard	Touring Limousine
	1571	148"	By Packard	Touring Sedan

production figures. One source stated 33,776 units of all series were produced in 1942 (Table 2). Could this mean motor production and not vehicle production? A known 672 Custom Super Eight chassis were built and a 2876 six-cylinder production figure leaves a balance of 28,680 units to be assigned to the 120 eight-cylinder Clipper series. The writer disputes the small 6-cylinder production figure because of high demand for the popular club sedan. Motor serial numbers are frequently higher than actual chassis-body deliveries since more motors were made for warranty and other outside demands. Can we assume then that many extra thousands were built in anticipation of motor switches, field service warranty problems, and perhaps even extras for the armed forces?

Contingency demands were on management's mind, and in all probability extra engines were sold for a multitude of other uses. The Packard Six motor was exceedingly tough and had been seen in various uses during World War II, one of which was Army marine use. Its best service, however, was after the war, when thousands were used in Packard taxis, a demeaning and prestige-losing use noted by the conservative post-war Packard buyer.

At this juncture, Packard's reputation had not

TABLE 2
Classic Straight Eight Packard Motors
160-180 Series

Packard horsepower was computed by squaring the bore and multiplying by number of cylinders, divided by 2.5.

Motor Numbers—All Series—8/25/41 to 2/2/42

* CE or E	500-001 to 599-999	2003,4,5,6,7,8	Super & Custom 8
† CE	500-000 to 503-366	2006,7,8	Custom Super 8, 180
‡ E	300-000 to 319-999	2001	Clipper 8
¶ E	.501 to 99-999	2000	Clipper 6

Published production figures

Robert Turnquist figures:		5/9/48 "MOTOR" figures:
1942 6 cylinder 11,325 units	110 series	Only 2876 units
1942 8 cylinder 19,199 units	120 series	Only 3209 units
1942 8 cylinder 2,580 units	160 series	No figure
1942 8 cylinder 672 units	180 series	No figure

* Factory release 5/7/48

† Turnquist Book

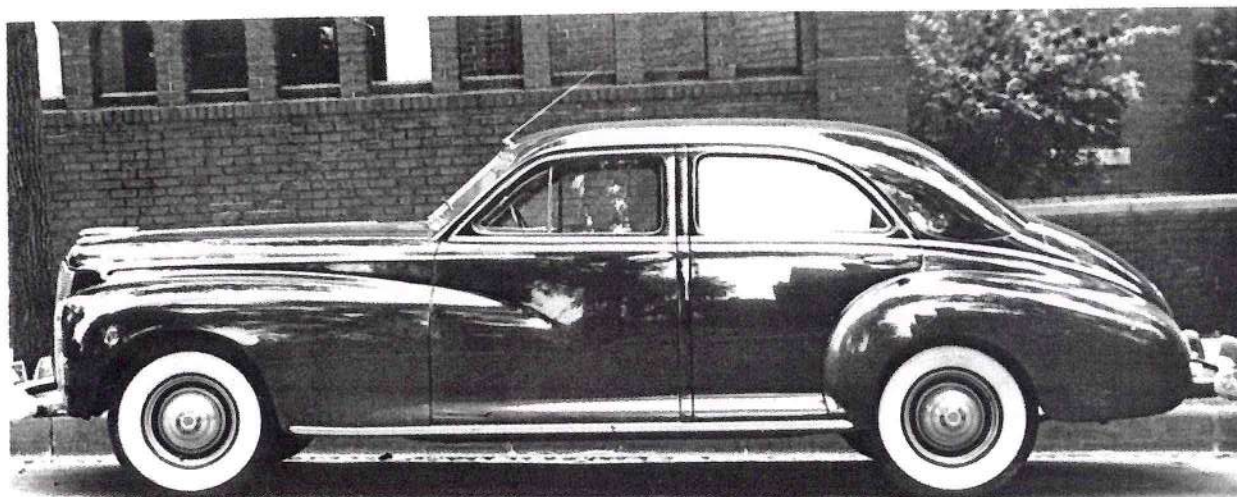
‡ Figures don't jibe with MOTOR.

¶ Figures don't jibe with MOTOR. A total of 33,776 units (all series) were constructed for Packard's last post-war year.

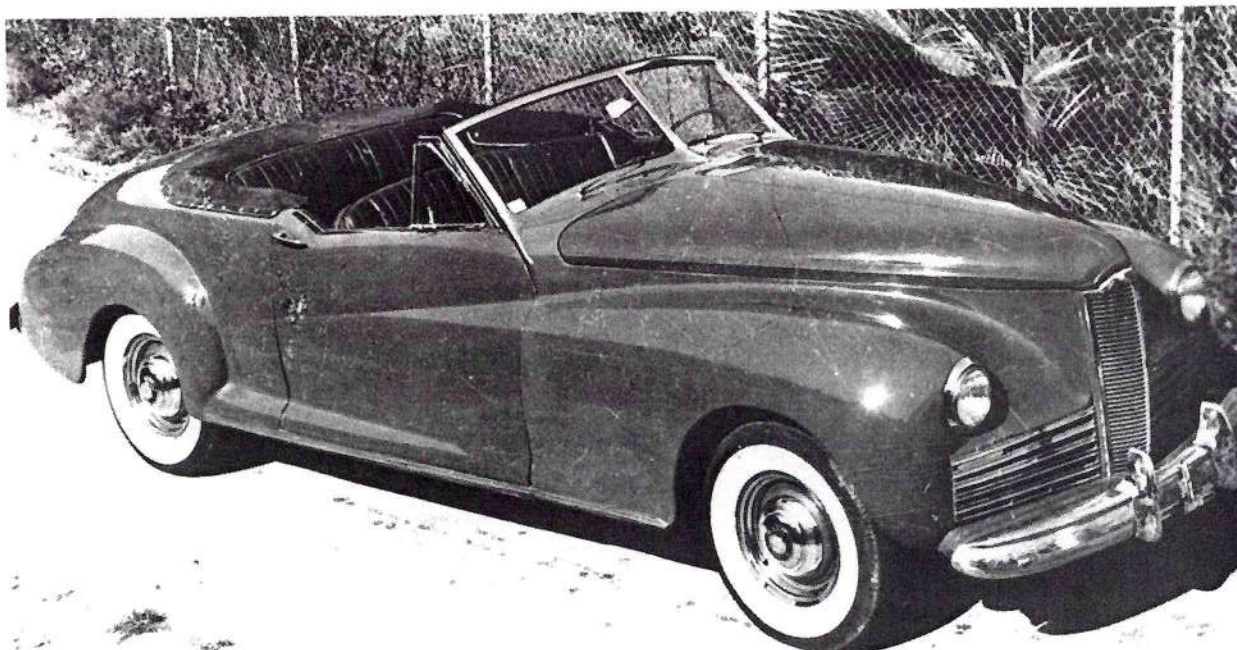
suffered over reliability claims. But really was a Packard in its proper niche serving as a taxi?

Tooling for the famous 12-cylinder Rolls-Royce Merlin motor had been in effect for over 2 years by 1942, and the famous switchover on the part of Packard engineers from English metric drawings to American inch drawings is discussed yet today.

Development of the superb Water Wasp or P.T. boat could never have been possible had Packard not had the reputation for building every conceivable type of motor configuration from L to V to X to Y, opposed vertical, and even a successful diesel aircraft



The new classic 1942 Clipper-styled Model 2006 touring sedan, style #1522, still looks somewhat modern. Price at factory—\$2346!



Only example of an open Packard Clipper on the 2006 chassis. Built on request, by Howard "Dutch" Darrin, for actor Errol Flynn, it is believed that the car was constructed in the last days of "Darrin of Paris" on Sunset Boulevard in Hollywood, California.

engine for mail planes in the '20s. Cooling and lubrication problems were licked by the early '30s and I'll never be convinced that all the famous runs made by Wood, Lombarda, and others weren't all part of the development of an effective engine for this budding arm of the U.S. Navy—Patrol Torpedo Boats! The engines, you will remember, were also successfully used by Britain and Canada in their P.T. boats.

For the duration, Packard's profile would depend on the aforementioned series and it could have endured if it would have given credit to Howard "Dutch" Darrin for his famous Victoria and for the new styling sensation, the "Clipper," that kept the boys in the services dreaming about the day they

would return and own a Packard automobile.

As the last 1942 Packard cars rolled off the assembly line, it marked the swan song of Packard's fine car image. Deals struck at this time would determine Packard's ability to fight the anticipated post-war battle of production. In 1945-6, the O.P.A. withheld steel from the Company. Packard's post-war steel allotment was based on a truthfully declared and limited 1941 and early 1942 production based on all series of cars. Also, early in 1939-40, engineering problems and cutbacks because of development of the English Merlin aviation motor set the stage for unanticipated developments 6 years later. In late 1945 Messrs Raymond Abernathy and Herbert Meadow, lately of the famous Packard Berk

Pittsburgh Distributorship, made the accusation at steel allocation hearings that General Motors received its allocations based on inflated 1941-1942 production figures that probably never existed at World War II's advent. A litany of problems over the next 6 years would see Packard's demise, largely because they could never meet their market share at a time when resurgence on a grand scale could have saved the Company.

The greatest Packard cars were built before the war, and with this view in mind the writer will from time to time provide readers with some of his views on custom crafters and some of their creations that are now so highly coveted throughout the world of collectors.

THE LAST PRE-WAR PACKARDS: 1942



C. Richard Bell's 1940 "Darrin" Packard at the Blue Dell show in 1954. Salmon beige, it was an original, well-maintained classic. In 1942, the doors were hinged at the front.



A 1432 style Packard Super 180 for 1941. It was only slightly different in 1942, when it carried style #1532; horizontal grilles on either side of the traditional Packard prow were a 1942 hallmark.

This brief article is an adjunct to a forthcoming story about one of Howard "Dutch" Darrin's most controversial creations. It can be best understood only by seeing in progression how his ideas evolved. Questioning the legitimacy of this car in a telephone call one day, Darrin stated the only way I could understand what he was talking about was to see examples. Not too many days later a packet came in the mail with some of Darrin's file copies of cars he had built in the past.

From Darrin's plus my own collection, I have selected examples that best summarize, are reproducible and of better quality. Inspired, I began to contact "Hibbard & Darrin," "Fernandez & Darrin," "Darrin of Paris," and "Darrin" owners throughout the country. Response was gratifying and it became obvious it could become a very large undertaking to tell his story in its entirety.

Darrin is unique inasmuch as he never elected outright to become a body designer. He did several things that were unique in that he incorporated all the buyers' thoughts and conceptions of what they thought their dream cars should look like. Sometimes these ideas were more outrageous than some of his ideas, which were for the time avant garde and not readily accepted by a conservative American market. This conservatism was not without its voice, since so much of what was available on request was nothing more than what had always been available from the days of horses and carriages, since that is where custom crafting had its beginnings. Hence, "carriage trade" always denoted those best able to pay and who were trend setters. The end of World War I saw the old ways changing much faster than some businesses' ability to swing with the times. Socializing with European trend-setters of the time, Paris became Darrin's home. Many ex-veterans of World War I who stayed in Paris were wealthy sons who could live extravagantly on the stipends parents would send just to keep them safely out of prospering family businesses back home. The last war had shown the stupidity of modern war and the evolving American-Parisian intelligencia produced a new class of pessimists with money and prestige unbound by old traditions. Darrin earlier joined forces with Tom

INSIGHT INTO

FERNANDEZ and DARRIN

by Edward J. Blend

Hibbard for a period until it was expedient for Hibbard to return to America in 1932. Allying then with wealthy industrialist Fernandez opened up even more monied contacts, since money follows money. (His cars cost from 125,000 to 1 million francs—\$20,000 to \$40,000.) It could not have happened at a worse time. The 1929 stock market crash took longer to be felt in Europe but was just as devastating, since its culmination was social unrest. Business did become viable and Darrin's styling became even more popular than in the twenties, because he was selling to the only class that had money and could afford and appreciate the avant garde designs that focused attention on their persons.

Sole American agent for Mr. Fernandez's custom creations was A. J. Miranda, Jr., Inc. at 502 Park Ave., New York City. A full page advertisement ran in the then new *Fortune* magazine. The first ad for Miranda was January 1932; and then Fernandez, a supplier of fine bodies, was noted in the March and May 1932 issues, intimating some sort of alliance. Miranda handled three makes—Dupont, Mabach Zepplin and custom Delages. Strangely, the Delage pictured exhibits all hallmarks of Darrin: severely slanted doors, step plates, streamlined cycle fenders, large cowl vents and raked windshields. On a call to Darrin on August 28, 1978, the conversation ended with "Let the lines of my car speak for themselves." The only remaining hard money was old money, and it was to this end that Fernandez and Darrin devoted their 6 short years of partnership. Worldwide, the auto market had changed radically by the mid-thirties. It is true, many inventions were already on drawing boards that the loose money of the twenties had attracted, but still the spirit of Paris had permeated Detroit and every designer with a new idea aspired to go there to see it come to fruition, unfettered by

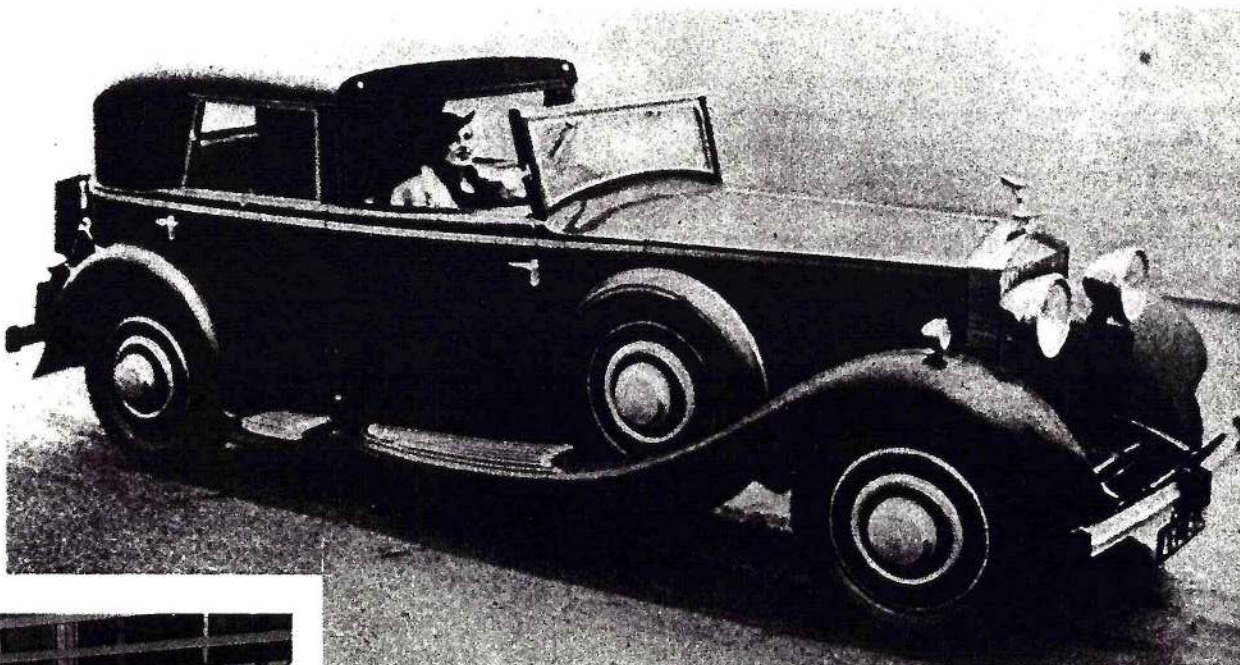
traditional ways of building and merchandising their wheeled products.

It can be said unequivocally that much of what Darrin conceived could not easily be brought down to the level of mass production, not only because of unique methods of production, but also because of the incumbent costs and the desirability of the end product. True art forms are hardly ever appreciated at the time of conception, nor are they conceived easily. Time is the factor that allows the process to sink in and the message to be understood by a newer generation, who always look back to see where they are coming from. Why else would the value of classic cars have become so overpriced today in relation to all other art forms of antique automobiles? This was the culmination of automobile art—using the best raw materials, the best labor, and designers who with understanding of art and form in its purest context conceived their product. The partnership began in late 1932 and by 1934 Fernandez & Darrin had moved to a new factory in Paris, where it was possible to build to the highest standards in Europe. Its location at Fabourg, St. Honore, near Place Vendome, near the very best luxury hotels in Paris gave the wealthiest clients a chance for an overview of the finest craftsmen that could be found in all of Europe. Partner Fernandez, with a short stint at custom body making under his own name, and with his past experience as a fine furniture manufacturer, along with his contacts as a banker and financier, made for a natural combination with Darrin's fertile mind. Starting in 1926 Fernandez had never built a hurried product. Even so, at the new facility, hardly more than two or three bodies were built and completed in one week. Very durable spring steel bumpers were a "must" on F & D cars. The cost of any component was never a factor in manufacture, since any-

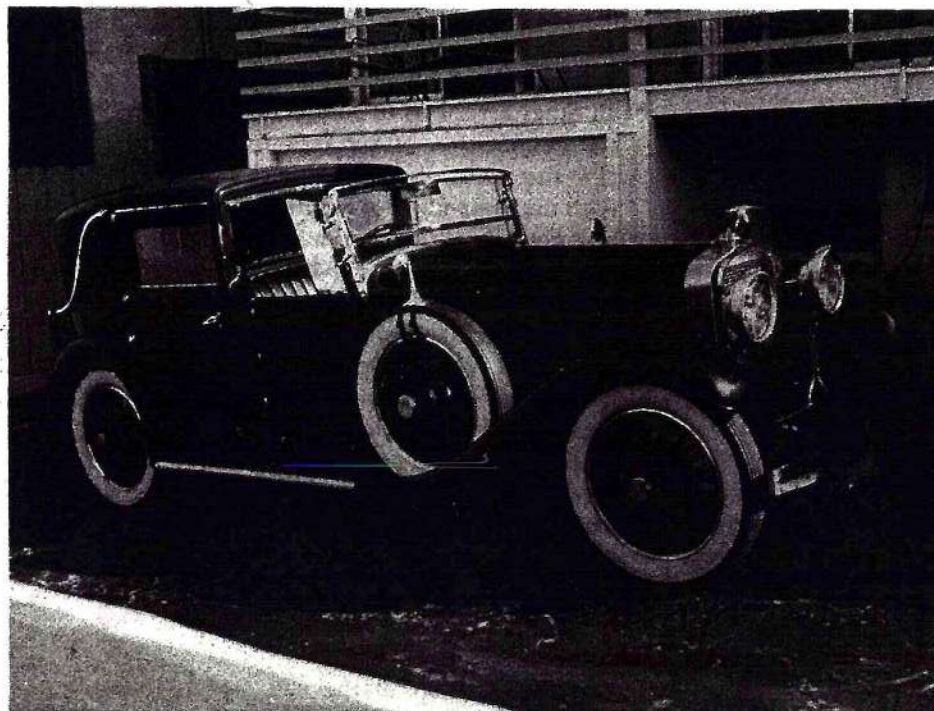
thing worth having done correctly was worth it, no matter the cost. Therefore, Darrin's body components became part of the safety factor that helped protect the investment of the purchaser. The finest Brazilian ash was used in all body construction, using forgings at critical points, and Darrin had already proven the viability of aluminum to lessen weight and increase speed and maneuvering. All of this was done with fewer than 200 employees, which sounds even today as an extravagant use of labor. Labor must have surely been cheap in those pre-war days to use so many to produce so little.

I hope you enjoy seeing some examples not generally present at today's shows. In our next view of Darrin, we will explore an example of his genius that many collectors couldn't believe he had created.

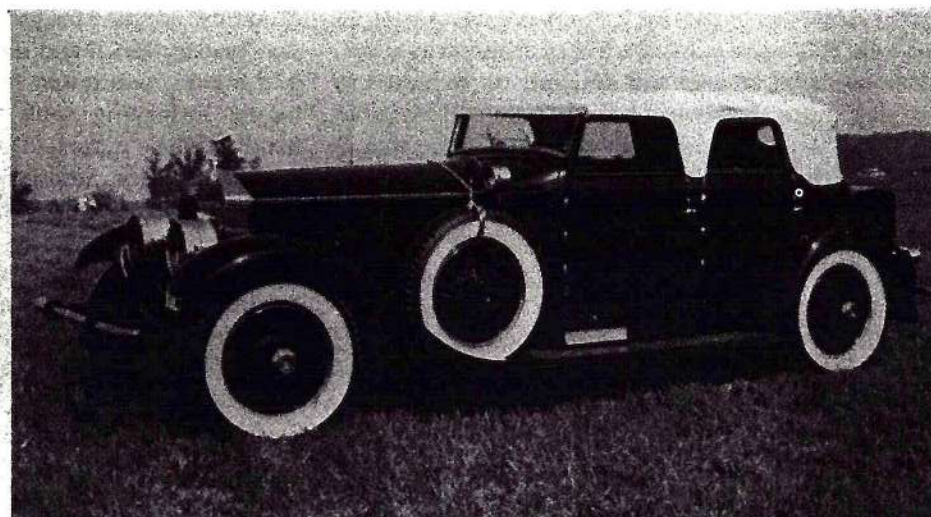
As Dutch would say, "Let the lines speak for themselves."



Hibbard & Darrin carry the credit for this 25 h.p. Rolls-Royce. Actress Lily Damita, a friend of Darrin, sits behind the wheel. Note dual runningboards, triangulated bumpers as seen on the Garbo Duesenberg, door handle bezels, and wheel discs. (Photo by Moffit)



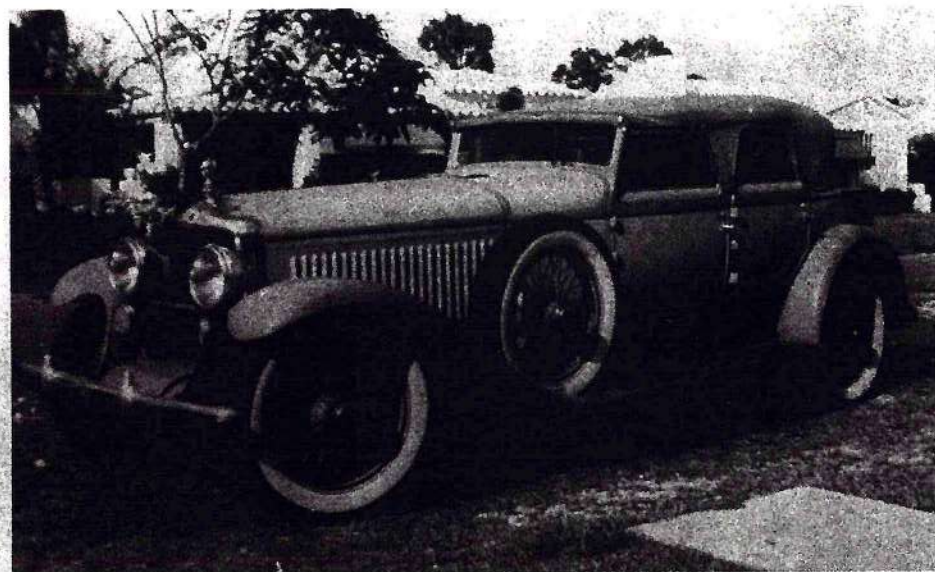
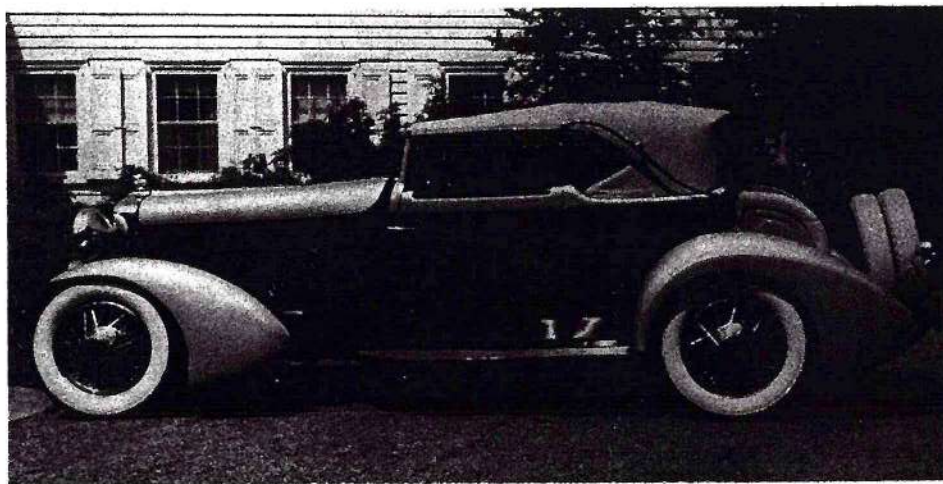
C. A. Painter of Laguna Beach, Calif. owns this lovely 1926 H6B Hispano Suiza town car, built under license by Darrin to D'teteran of Brussels, Belgium. Hibbard & Darrin Patent leasing configures are landau bars, window revels, double glass overlay windshield, door handles, and a unique bumper. (Photo courtesy of C. A. Painter.)



Member Archie Hough of Monroe, N.C., owns this 1927 Rolls-Royce with body by Hibbard & Darrin. Note trapezoid top treatment, window revels, and narrow windscreen—all Darrin innovations. This is believed to be another example of Darrin innovations built under license agreements. (Photo courtesy of Archie Hough.)



A 1929 A.K. Series Minerva all weather brougham owned by member Robert Wellwood (here at age 29) of Charleston, W. Va., since 1940. It is now under restoration. Carrying the Hibbard & Darrin insigne, typical Darrin hallmarks are trapezoid windscreen, see-through runningboards, and patented jiffy top stiffeners. H&D insigne can be seen on the battery box cover by Wellwood's foot. (Photo courtesy of Robert Wellwood.)

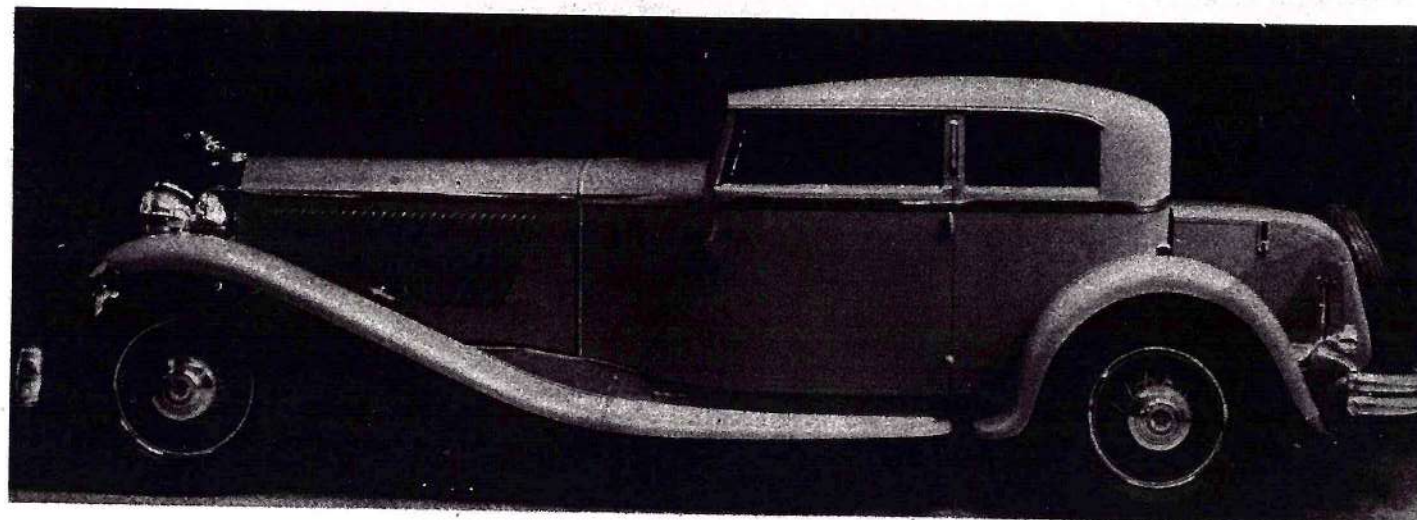
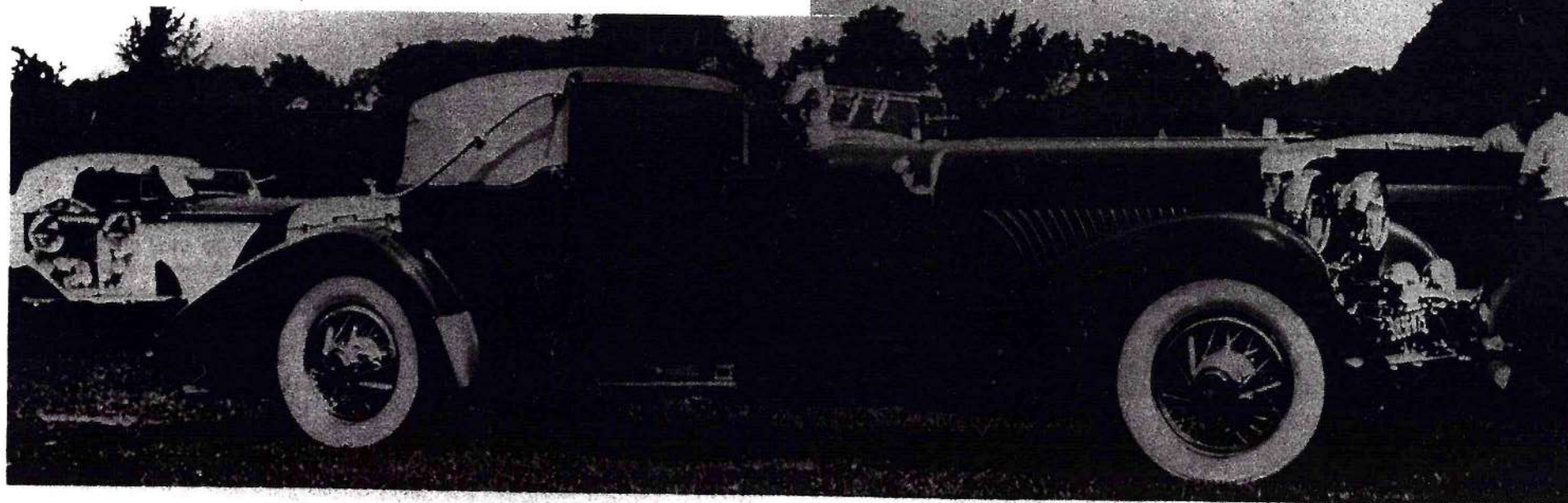


A 1926 Hibbard & Darrin Minerva at an early Spring Meet of the AACA in 1955. This is an example of a body built under license and is somewhat subdued compared to one built under Darrin's direct supervision. Cars like this were selling for \$300 to \$800 in those years. (Blend Collection)

FERNANDEZ and DARRIN

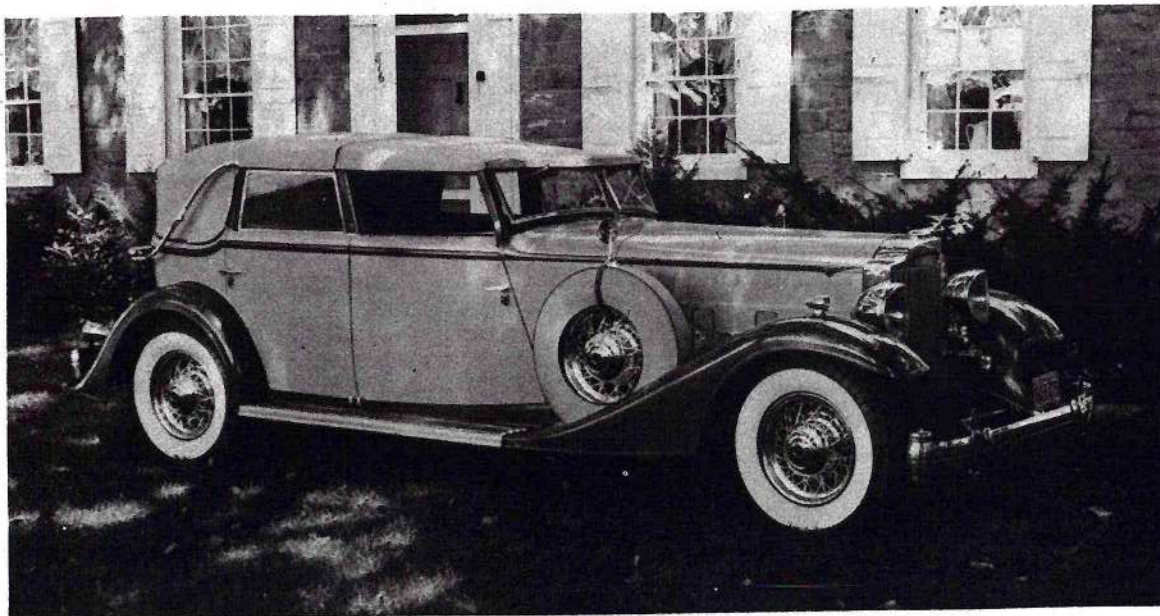
1929 Stutz SV16 Hibbard & Darrin convertible Victoria. The writer remembers this example on a used car lot in Akron, Ohio after WW2. Someone had affixed a grille akin to a 1938 American Austin, and the car had evidence of very hard use. Member Ross Stroebecker bought and stored the car in his barn, where its aluminum skin suffered extensive damage from bat guano. It is reported that the car had been sent to Denmark to provide transportation for Pittsburgh millionaire Andrew Mellon. It carried at one time the Danish coat of arms emblem that led many to believe the crown had owned the car. The car could have been delivered to Copenhagen from Paris after construction. Robert Gassaway restored the car from basket case status, requiring almost all panelling to be replaced. Semi-cycle pontoon fenders, trapezoid blind quarter, and the seldom seen extended overlay hood add to the elan of dual rear spares and a leather-covered trunk that spells "chic and very continental." Secretary of the Treasury Mellon was never seen in Pittsburgh in such an extroverted automobile. Car is Grand Classic #600. (Now owned by Richard Slobodien, S. Orange, N.J.) (Photo by John Takacs.)

In the formative days of the Western Pennsylvania Region of the Classic Car Club of America, members could account for 12 Duesenbergs. The most famous was then owned by Dr. Erie Heath, who loved the lines of this Victoria that Darrin had built at the specific request of actress Greta Garbo, probably one of her most unquiet statements. She used the car only one season. A narrow 10-inch windshield is serviced by no fewer than three windshield wiper motors; it sports double rear spares with a propellor device serving as a tightener, patented teardrop see-through step plates, Feugolborns, trapezoid bumpers, cover over the pitman arm, frame covers, very extended landau bars, fender-covers on rear fenders, and extended leather-covered trunk. It is generally agreed this is the most Darrin of all Darrins. (Blend Collection)

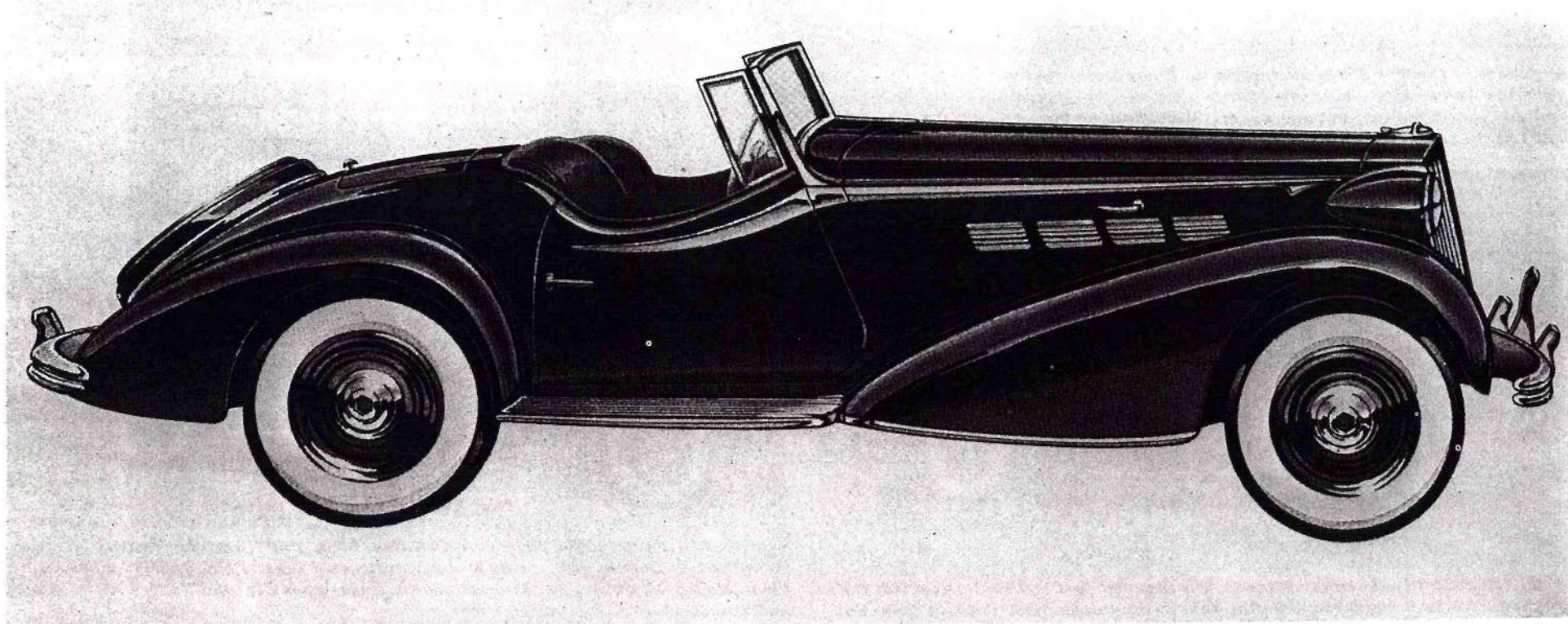


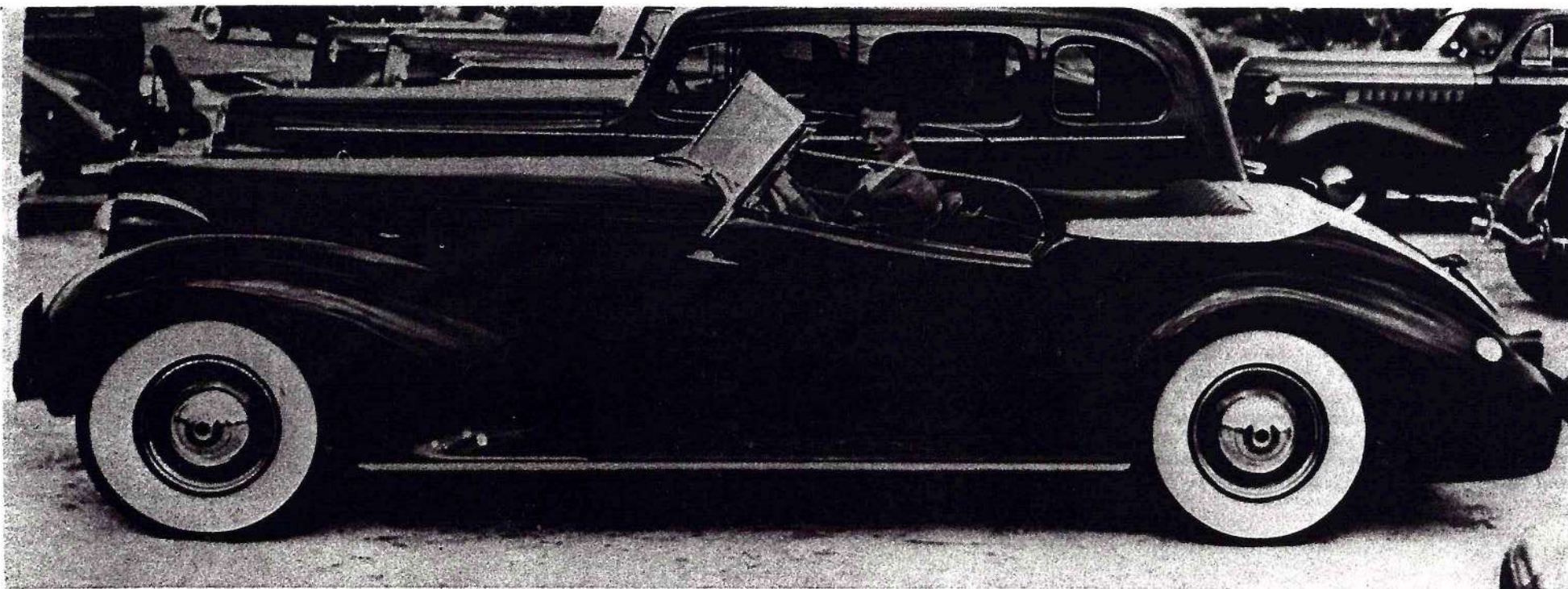
An example of what Darrin did to a 1932 903 Deluxe Eight Packard chassis. Darrin had been honored with "Brevet d'Invention" for incepting under the cowl steering. There is no real need for such an invention other than élan. It carries a Hibbard & Darrin label and almost every hallmark of his imagination. (Photo by Moffit)

1933 Packard convertible limousine by Fernandez & Darrin. Owned by Robert Briglia, Phillipsburg, N.J. (Photo courtesy of Robert Briglia.)

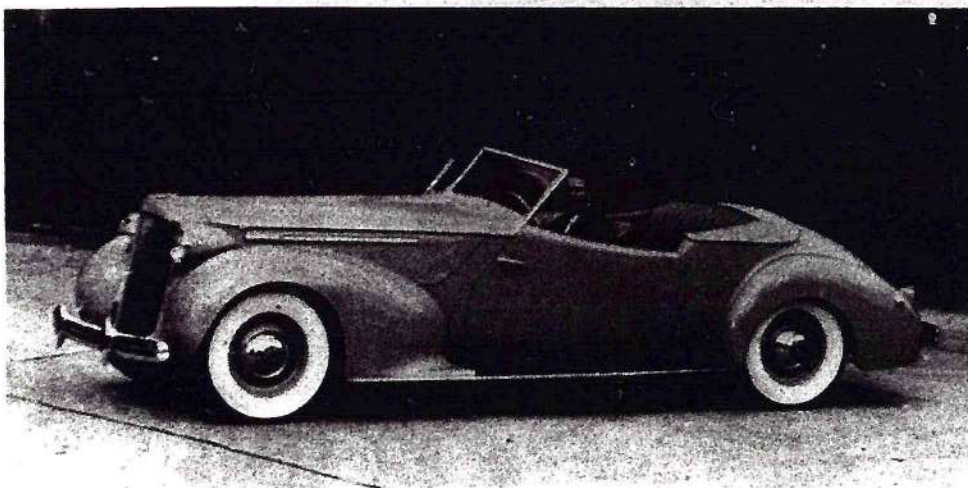


Using a 1937 120 Packard chassis, in 1938 Darrin constructed his first "Darrin of Paris" American-built custom car at a Hollywood location, where, by chance, actor Dick Powell first saw it when nearly completed. Powell drove it to Pittsburgh, where he was honing his skills as an actor of note at the Enright Theatre. In the late '70s Darrin resurrected old air brush drawings and sold them as a group of his work he liked best. (Blend Collection)

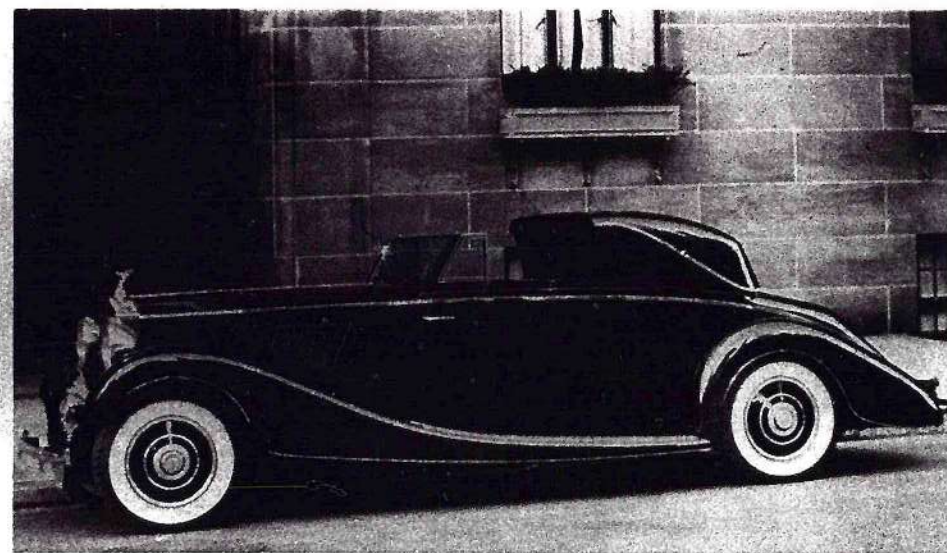




An example of Darrin's first ballmarks on the Junior series Packard chassis. Upper door severe rake and kickup, windshield top extended vee, extremely long hood, and lack of hood side embellishment, running boards, headlights-tailights say that the chassis is a 1939 120. A Darrin of Paris example. (Darrin Collection)



A 1939 120 Packard with runningboards. It is rumored that Eve Peron used this car in Argentina. Perhaps it had been purloined from a rich anti-peronist. (Darrin Collection)



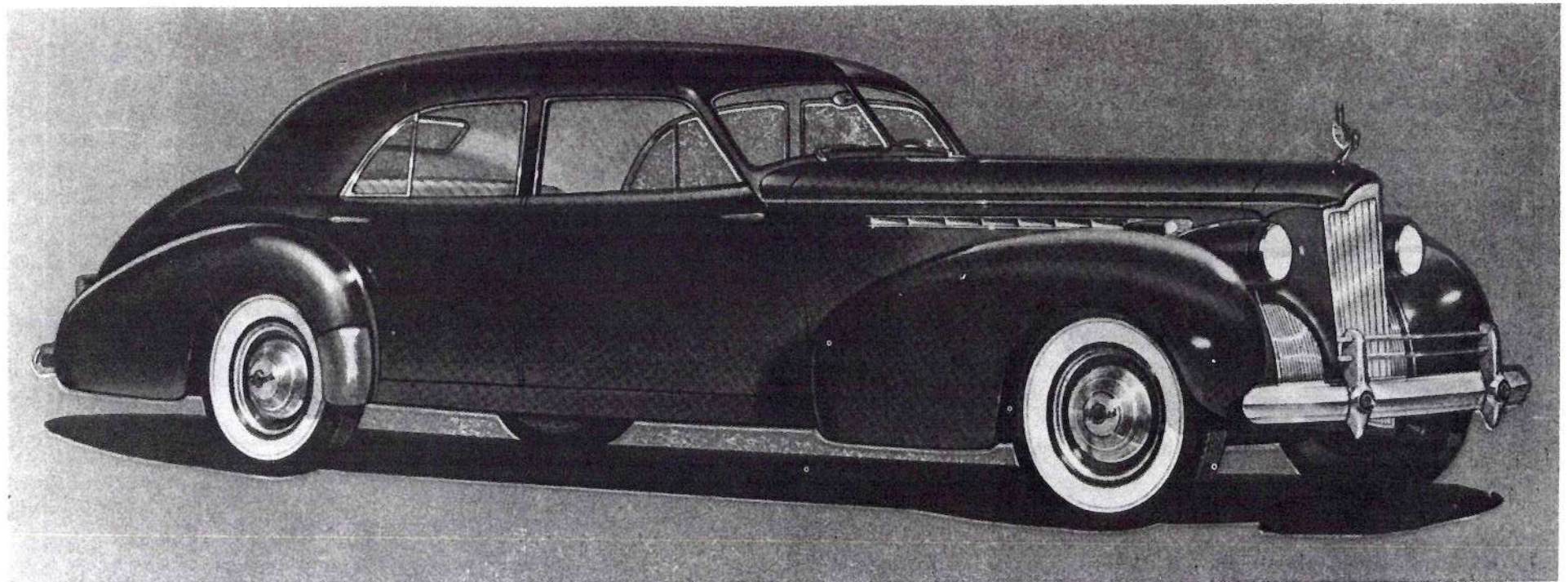
Windshield, doorhandles, the severe landau bars, and sweeping fenders all spell Fernandez & Darrin. This example was constructed on a 1938/39 P111 Rolls-Royce. Identified by Darrin as one of his last works, it was probably built under license. (Janey Collection)



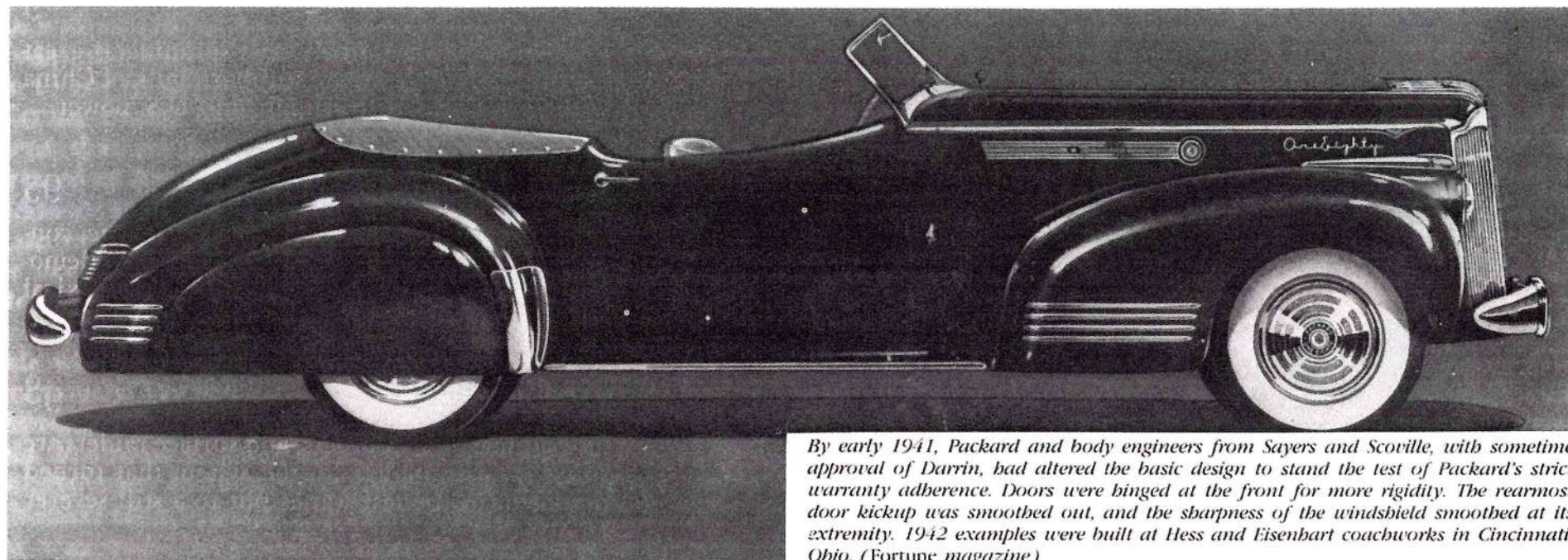
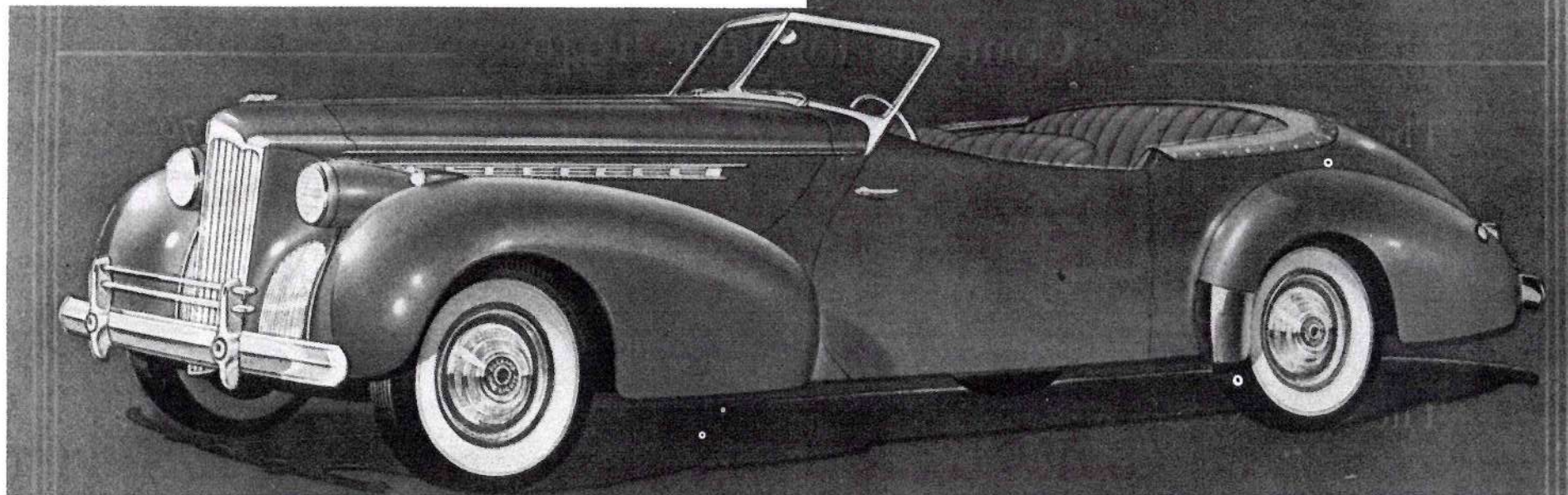
Ken Hinds of Glen Burnie, Md., owns this 1938/39 120 series Packard. Note Ken's car does not have runningboards, which became passe after late 1939. (Photo by Ernest York.)

FERNANDEZ and DARRIN

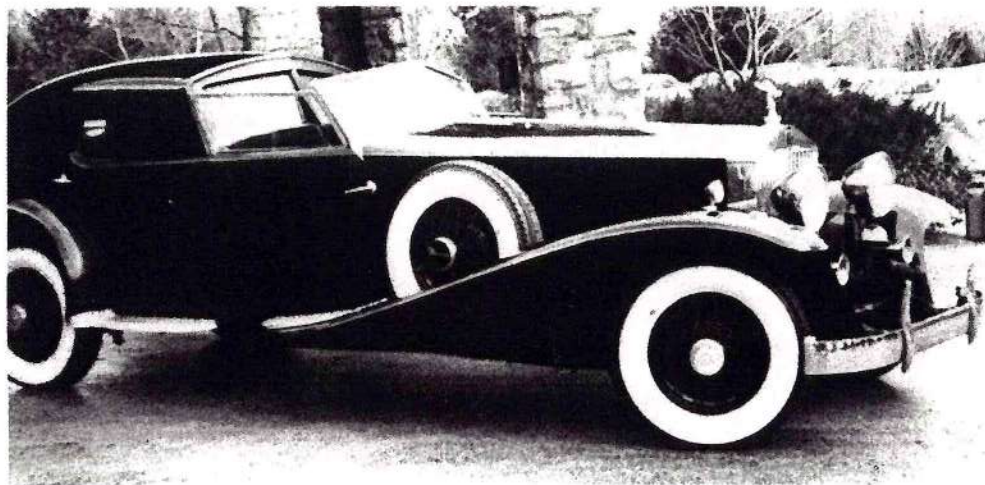
In December 1939 one of the first Darrin-designed cars to be advertised in international publications was the seldom seen Custom Sport Sedan labelled "Body by Darrin." No price was suggested. (Fortune magazine)



This ad does not tell the reader that this example is "Darrin of Paris." Basic price was \$4570 on the 180 series chassis. It is believed that other examples on the 120 chassis for the nineteenth series could have been built in Connersville, Indiana. Both series 120/180 carried nomenclature numbers of 700, a carryover from Fernandez & Darrin days, when parts carrying that cachet indicated Darrin's full involvement. (Fortune magazine)



By early 1941, Packard and body engineers from Sayers and Scoville, with sometime approval of Darrin, had altered the basic design to stand the test of Packard's strict warranty adherence. Doors were binged at the front for more rigidity. The rearmost door kickup was smoothed out, and the sharpness of the windshield smoothed at its extremity. 1942 examples were built at Hess and Eisenhart coachworks in Cincinnati, Ohio. (Fortune magazine)



Another example of "Darrinizing," this rebodied P-11 Rolls-Royce was shown at Buck Hill Falls, when Darrin was speaker for the Classic Car Club of America annual meeting. Radical front fenders and windshields spell it out. It was common practice to take favorite chassis or low mileage cars and update them, especially during the Depression. (Blend Collection.)



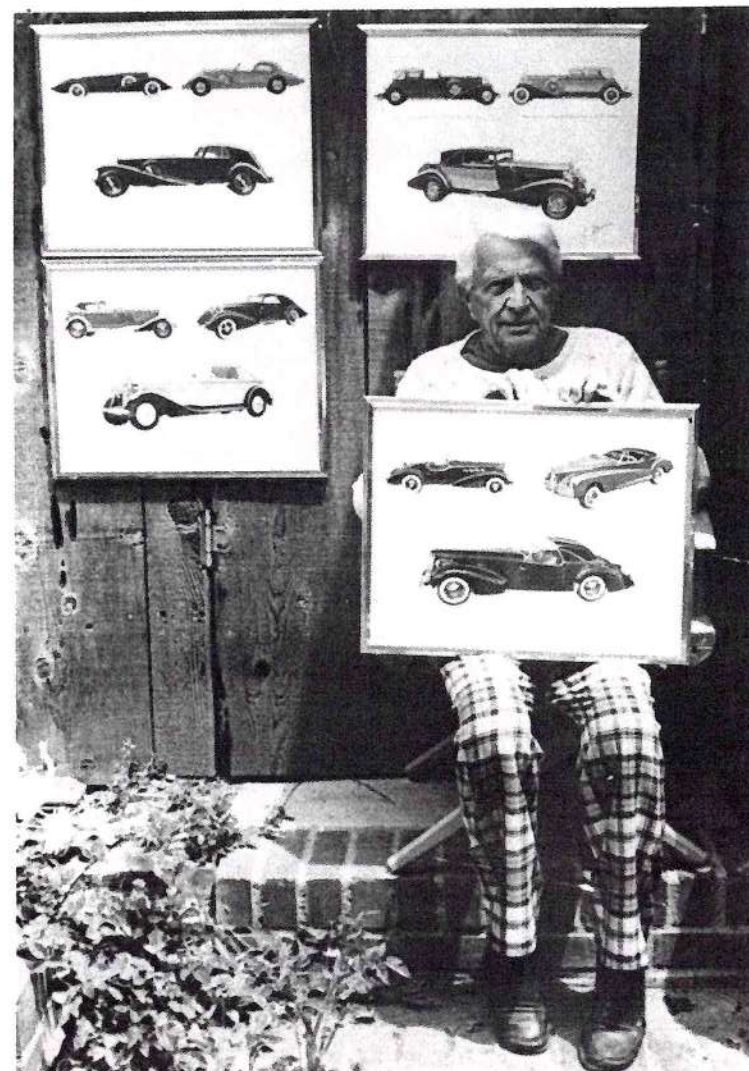
It is believed that Darrin designed this little bardtop coupe for his own personal use. Kaiser Darrins were noted for their sliding doors, the pursed-lip grille, and the curved one-piece windshield. Several of these cars were fitted with McCullough superchargers. (Darrin Collection)



A refugee from the machinations of Adolph Hitler, Count Rochesky, who met Darrin in Paris, had Darrin customize his 1942 Lincoln Continental when he moved to Beverly Hills to wait out the war. The flowing strip was of gold-plated brass. Count Rochesky at the wheel. (Darrin Collection)



Darrin planned to build this sports car, which strongly looks Healy Nash in origin. (Darrin Collection)



Howard "Dutch" Darrin at his Santa Monica home with the lithographs he was offering to his aficionados. (Darrin Collection)

Bill Mitchell (right), of Chevrolet Corvette fame, organized a testimonial on Darrin's behalf in 1977. (Darrin Collection)



The "Photo Gallery," as Packard called its archives, in 1940; Hugh Ferry conferring with Alvan Macauley that same year, *Life* magazine, October 21st, 1940.

war that, as day passed day, seemed increasingly inevitable.*

For the moment the automobile business had to go on, with the introduction of the 1941 line in September 1940. Mechanical changes were few for the Super-8—new motor mounts in larger rubber cushions, new steel-backed connecting rod bearings, a low pressure (four-and-a-half pounds standard; twelve pounds for cars with air conditioning) cooling system, an oil bath cleaner among the noticeable refinements. Certainly more noticeable was the new Packard look. Packard had finally concluded that appearance just had to be the key to sales success. Chassis changes were incorporated mainly to accommodate the styling. The suspension was dropped to allow lower floors without a driveshaft tunnel, greater front and rear overhangs called for redimensioning of frames. Although wheelbases remained the same, overall length of the cars was increased about five inches. The radiator was again moved forward, two-and-a-half inches this time, and the hood was uninterrupted from windshield to chrome-trimmed Packard grille, giving the impression of immense length. The radiator shell no longer appeared as an entity; hinged at the center, the hood tops lifted up like lids, the

*After storage for a while, the dies were then sold to various buyers including the Soviet Union where the ghost of the Packard later appeared as the ZIS. This disposal of the dies was not as reckless as it might appear. Briggs had supplied some body panels for the regular Packard line beginning in 1938, and that company was able to fill the breach by producing all Packard bodies from June 1940 on, most of these the new Clipper shells. Panels for the other lines had been stockpiled to last until Clipper styling could take over—a gamble on Packard's part. But endure the stockpiled panels did—until car production was shut down with America's entrance into the war.

sides remaining in place. The massive hood side grilles were gone—ventilation being taken care of entirely through louvers under the fenders—and in their place was a narrow chrome band incorporating the hood latch handle. Newly contoured fenders met the hood sides with little declivity, the headlamps now having been inset into the fenders—and this, for Packard, was news! At first the headlamp bezels were painted body color, later chrome plated. Meretricious perhaps were the overstressed parking lamps which rode piggyback on the headlamps, the new chrome, plastic and gold feather hood ornament (though the "doughnut pusher" was available at \$6.75 and the pelican at ten dollars), and the four stainless steel strips on each fender, which last two features more than a few owners had removed. The familiar Packard spearhead, now in stainless steel, headed a stainless molding which extended along the belt and around the rear of the body on closed cars articulating the top and, when desired, the two tones of the color scheme.

Two-tone color schemes had been impossible with the old body and its lack of a demarcation line. Now they were back, together with single color schemes and further selections in upholstery materials, in striped or plain pattern broadcloth or Bedford cord. If desired, "Multi-tone" options could be had, the leading edges of the seat cushions and upper part of the backs in a darker shade than the remainder, and in convertibles the darker portion might be leather, the lighter, cloth—with all interior hardware to match.

Again there was a distinct resemblance among Junior and Senior Packards, the two Super-8's were identical to each other save for trim and appointments. The 127- and 138-inch wheelbase models were available with or without running boards—a decision that could be reversed after delivery, if desired. Cars without running boards were



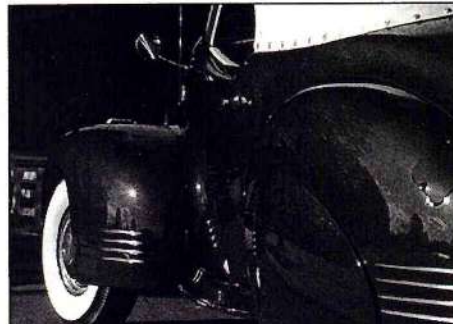
Typical parts from early Forties Packards.



Coachbuilder's script displayed proudly.



Door upholstery matches seat design.



Chrome strips are standard Packard parts.

ers. But Packard deserves credit for the first serious attempt at providing this now almost universally expected convenience.

At least the air-conditioning adventure didn't seem to hurt overall Packard sales, which doubled in 1940, from 46,405 in 1939 to an even 98,000. Particularly encouraging, on the surface at least, was the sale of 5,662 1940 One-Sixtys, compared to just 3,962 1939 Super Eights; and 1,900 One-Eightys vs. just 446 1939 Twelves. Production of the entry-level six-cylinder Packard had positively exploded, from 24,350 in 1939 to 62,300 in 1940. But that, in a way, was also the bad news. A combined total of 7,562 One-Sixtys and One-Eightys didn't look as healthy when compared to 13,406 1940 Cadillacs. Packard was hanging on by slipping down-market.

Even Packard management now conceded that Cadillac's more adventurous styling had captured the buyers' imaginations. Packard design chief Ed Macauley may have been the chairman's son, but he was clearly out of ideas. His sedans and limousines fairly dripped with formal importance, but they lacked panache, and their basic look had stagnated since 1938. Packard had a more adventurous sedan on the drawing board, but no one seemed

PACKARD MODEL YEARS

No one could ever accuse Packard of not doing things its own way. Beginning in calendar-year 1925, the company decided to officially eschew model years. Thus, the Packard Eight, receiving its first major update since its June 1923 introduction, became the "Second Series"; the revised Six appearing at the same time became the Third Series, and so on—except that, by the 1930s, the various "series" pretty much coincided with everyone else's model years, anyway. Thus, when the One-Twenty appeared for 1935, it was part of the Twelve Series. The Thirteenth Series was skipped for obvious reasons, so the '36 models were all "Fourteenth Series" cars. Counting forward to 1942, our driveReport car belongs to the "Twentieth Series." But don't worry: We've used conventional model years throughout the main text, for clarity—and we hope that the ghosts of East Grand Boulevard will forgive us.

satisfied with it, and desperate management finally turned to Darrin and asked him if he could produce an alternative in just ten days. He did, creating a quarter-scale model that, with only minor tweaking from Packard's own staff, entered production as the Packard Clipper in April 1941. In lieu of cash payment, Darrin was promised an increase in orders for new Victorias.

We won't detail the Clipper's engineering development here. *SIA* did that in issues #59 and #121; and we'll review it when we show you the dashing '42

THE PERILS OF A PARTICULAR PACKARD

Naturally, we prefer to tell happy, encouraging stories about peoples' experiences with special-interest automobiles—or at least stories with happy endings. But in the case of our driveReport Packard, the story could hardly be happy and true at the same time.

When the photos were taken, it belonged to Gene Epstein. The Packard's previous owner had invested \$210,000 in restoration, but Gene wasn't satisfied with the way it looked, or ran. "It was as if the car were put together to make a picture," he said, "but not even a good-looking picture. It had been to three major body restorers, and none of them had done it satisfactorily."

The deeper Gene dug, the murkier the story became. "We found multiple bills for the same rebuilt carburetor. The steering box was repainted, but it was full of water, and the gears were rusted. That cost \$1,000 to put right." Similarly, the transmission was beautifully painted, but the overdrive didn't work. That cost another \$5,000. "The top and the bows were covered with material, but inside the bows were scorched. So another \$2,000 later, you have new top bows."

Sadly, Gene had little better luck himself with suppliers or restorers. "It was so out of alignment when it came out of the restoration shop that it ruined a set of tires in 40 miles. I got the

panels for under the engine from a major Packard supplier, and it still cost \$350 to straighten and repaint them—and then they didn't fit. They were the wrong parts. They were for a '48 Clipper." Gene did point out two specialist shops for their particularly good work. One was Trenton Brakes, in New Jersey. When Gene bought the Packard, its four brake drums had three different wheel cylinders. He sent it to Trenton Brakes. "I asked them to calibrate everything, to make the shoes fit the drums, and mate the drums to the shoes, and set the wheel cylinders for the proper expansion. They did the work in two days. In fact, they've solved any problem I've ever seen, on any of my cars."

"And Jim Rolls, the upholsterer, in a place called Taylor Trim in New Philadelphia, Ohio, did the most magnificent interior and top work that I've seen on any car. It was a hand-made car, and nothing was the same on one side as it was on the other. He had to do and re-do things over and over again, but his work is magnificent."

Some months after we drove and photographed this Darrin, Gene sold it; he said that the car had caused him so much frustration that he couldn't enjoy owning it. He has since bought a '41 Darrin Victoria, and is very happy with it.

PARTS PRICES

Starter, rebuilt	 \$225 w/exchange
Timing chain and gear set	 \$215
Carburetor, Carter 2bbl, rebuilt	 \$175
	w/exchange
Transmission rebuilding kit	 \$155
Brake overhaul kit	 \$155
Master cylinder, rebuilt	.. \$145 w/exchange
Clutch disc, rebuilt	 \$110 w/exchange
Water pump, rebuilt	 \$110 w/exchange
Engine overhaul gasket set	 \$100
Throwout bearing and collar assembly	 \$100 w/exchange
Fuel pump, rebuilt	 \$90 w/exchange
Synchronizer repair kit	 \$55
Rear axle shaft bearing	 \$50
Generator rebuild kit	 \$35

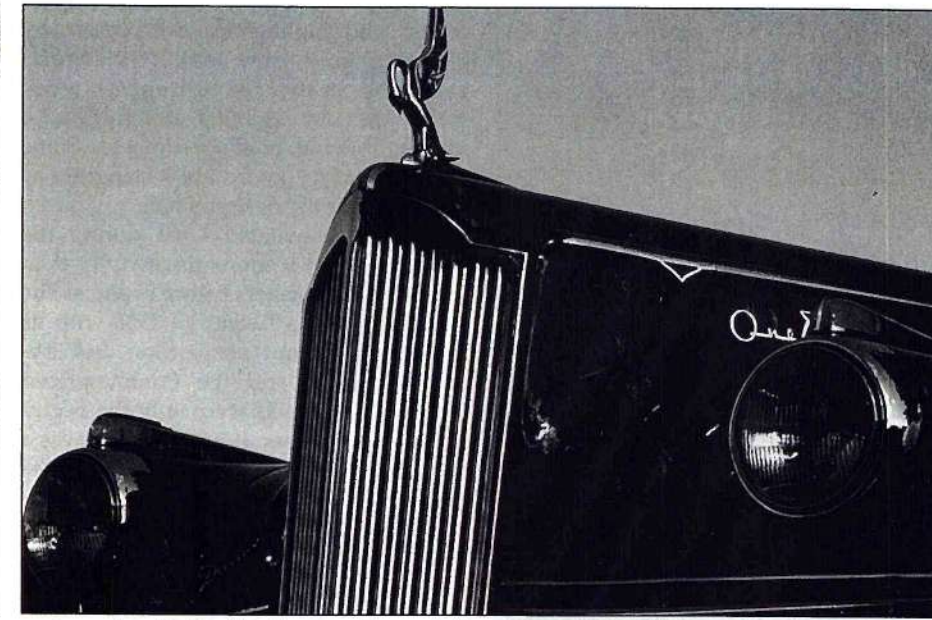
PROS & CONS

Pros

Excellent braking ability
Loads of straight-8 power
Superlative coachbuilt styling

Cons

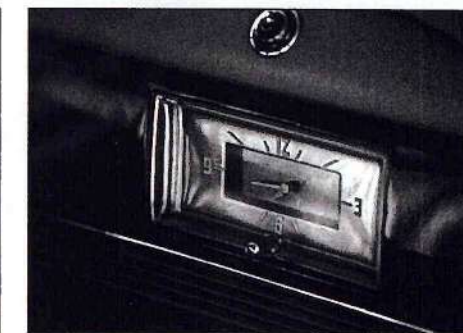
Exceptionally rare
All body parts extinct
Hard to get in if portly



Imposing Packard grille complements Darrin's well-rounded exterior shape nicely.



Shapely taillamp accents rear fender line.



Passenger-side clock always a nice touch.

vertible with cut-down doors, for actor Dick Powell. That led to additional orders for similar cars, and by 1939 Darrin had developed a definitive, four-seat "Convertible Victoria" based on a sectioned One Twenty convertible coupe.

His efforts did not go unnoticed on East Grand Boulevard. Sensing an opportunity, Dutch enterprisingly arranged for one of his pilot models to be parked at the Packard proving ground during a major dealers' meeting. The dealers loved it, and Packard management agreed to add it to the 1940 catalog.

Now Dutch was on a roll, as he also sold Packard not only his Victoria but proposals for a Sport Sedan and Convertible Sedan as well. These dashing four-doors were offered only on the 138-inch One-Eighty chassis, and listed for a mighty \$6,100 and \$6,300 respectively, whereas the Victoria could be had on the 127-inch One-Eighty for \$4,570, or on the One-Twenty for a mere \$3,819. The latter was a particularly good deal, as it looked almost exactly like the more expensive model. Normally, Super Eights were distinguished from Junior Packards by more elaborate hood-side louvers, but the Victoria's sectioned hood left room only for a more narrow, Darrin-designed lou-

ver panel that was common to both cars.

Packard admirably refused to equip either Victoria with still-fashionable side-mounted spares, thereby preserving the purity of their low profile. Early in production, the Darrins became the first Packards to shed their running boards as well. On some early Victorias, the doors even extended down over the sills, a daring concept at that time. But early buyers of the Victoria complained of front-end vibrations. It turned out that Darrin had lowered the radiator by removing the heavy crossmember underneath it. The thin strap that he substituted did not provide enough rigidity. Fortunately, Packard engineers in Detroit quickly cobbled up a reinforcing kit, which was shipped to dealers and installed at the factory's expense.

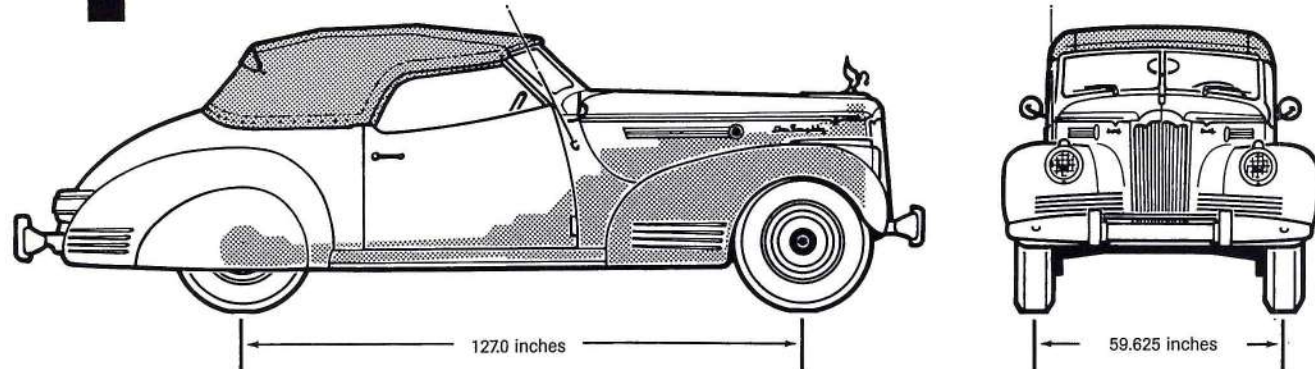
Darrin built about two dozen Victorias in Los Angeles before shifting production to the former Auburn bodyworks in Connersville, Indiana. The pilot Sport Sedan was begun in L.A. but trimmed and painted in Indiana, where the first convertible sedan was constructed as well. The Sport Sedan and Convertible Sedan cost as much as they did because they shared virtually no structure and few panels with

any "production" Packard. Probably twelve convertible sedans were built, of which nine still exist. Possibly two Sport Sedans were built to the original design, then two more using the production radiator and hood and modified production doors. The Victoria relied more heavily on modified production parts and could be sold for less; as many as 50 may have been built during the 1940 model year alone.

The Darrin Packards were advertised monthly in *Fortune*, and occasionally in *The Saturday Evening Post*. Drummer Gene Krupa bought one, in his trademark cream with red wheels. Yet, even while Packard looked back with these last fine examples of custom coachbuilding, the company's closed production cars anticipated the future with the world's first automotive air conditioner. Actually, Packard called it a Weather-Conditioner and priced it at a very reasonable \$275. It was not without problems. The evaporator took up space in the trunk; air distribution was poor; and with no accumulator, nor even a clutch for the compressor, temperature became an inverse function of engine speed. Packard built perhaps 2,000 air-conditioned cars in 1940-42, and dealers ended up discounting them to wary buy-

specifications

illustrations by Russell von Sauers, The Graphic Automobile Studio
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1942 Packard One-Eighty Darrin

Base price	\$4,595
Std. equipment	standard clock, electric wipers, turn signals
Options on dR car	Overdrive, radio, heater/defroster

ENGINE	
Type	Inline 8
Bore x stroke	3.5 inches x 4.625 inches
Displacement	356 cubic inches
Compression ratio	6.85:1
Horsepower @ rpm	165 @ 3,600
Torque @ rpm	292 @ 1,800
Taxable horsepower	39.2
Valve gear	L-head
Valve lifters	Hydraulic
Main bearings	9
Fuel delivery	Carter 2v carburetor
Fuel system	AC mechanical pump
Cooling system	Low pressure, closed, centrifugal pump
Lubrication system	Pressure, gear-type pump
Exhaust system	Single
Electrical system	6-volt

TRANSMISSION	
Type	3-speed manual plus Warner overdrive, synchromesh on 2 and 3
Ratios: 1st	2.43:1
2nd	1.53:1
3rd	1.00:1
Reverse	3.16:1
Overdrive	0.72:1

CLUTCH	
Type	Long, single dry disc, semi-centrifugal
Diameter	11 inches

DIFFERENTIAL	
Type	Hypoid
Ratio	4.09:1
Drive axle, rear	Semi-floating

STEERING	
Type	Packard worm and roller
Ratio	20.19:1
Turns lock-to-lock	N/A
Turning circle	44 feet (curb to curb)

BRAKES	
Type	Bendix 4-wheel hydraulic
Front	12 x 2.25-inch drum
Rear	12 x 2-inch drum
Swept area	208.3 square inches
Handbrake	Mechanical, on rear drums

CHASSIS & BODY	
Frame type	Separate frame with channel siderails, boxed at the ends and braced in the center with a gusseted X-member
Body style	2+2 convertible coupe

SUSPENSION	
Front	Independent, one lateral and one leading lower arm per side, lever shocks as upper

arms, coil springs, anti-roll bar	
Rear	Live axle on parallel leaf springs, Panhard rod
Shock absorbers	Front, Delco double-acting; rear, Delco direct-acting
Tires	7.00 x 15 inch 4-ply
Wheels	Stamped steel disc

WEIGHTS AND MEASURES	
Wheelbase	127 inches
Overall length	215.5 inches
Front track	59.625 inches
Rear track	60.6875 inches
Shipping weight	3,920 pounds

CAPACITIES	
Crankcase	7 quarts
Cooling system	20 quarts
Transmission	2 pints
Overdrive	1.25 pints
Rear axle	6.75 pints
Fuel tank	20 gallons

CALCULATED DATA	
Stroke/bore ratio	1.32
Hp per c.i.d.	0.46
Weight per hp	23.8 pounds
Lb. per sq. in. (brakes)	18.8

Among the 127-inch Super Eights, only the One-Sixty convertible coupe and the One-Eighty Darrin Victoria escaped Clipperization. Otherwise, Packard's "traditional" styling—as revised for '41—endured only on the 138- and 148-inch sedans and limousines. And even they were updated with Clipper-esque horizontal side grilles.

Body production had in fact ceased on East Grand Boulevard in May 1941, to make room for more marine and aircraft engines. Clipper bodies came from giant supplier Briggs, anyway. Bodies for other Packard models would be produced only as long as inventory held out. Rarely

noticed, the previously optional 6.85:1 head was now standard, boosting actual One-Sixty/One-Eighty output to 165hp. Other changes for 1942 included larger dish-type hubcaps, factory-installed turn signals ('41 models had been wired to have turn signals installed by dealers), and electric wipers ("Juniors" had them since '40), with the switch at the base of the dash. Stomping the accelerator to the floor now activated the starter, as in the contemporary Buick. Some 2,580 One-Sixties and 672 One-Eightys—most of the latter not Clippers—rolled off the line before all U.S. auto production ceased on February 7th. **69**

CLUB SCENE

The Packard Club

420 S. Ludlow St.
Dayton, OH 45202
800-527-3452
www.packardclub.org
Dues: \$40/year; Membership: 5,000

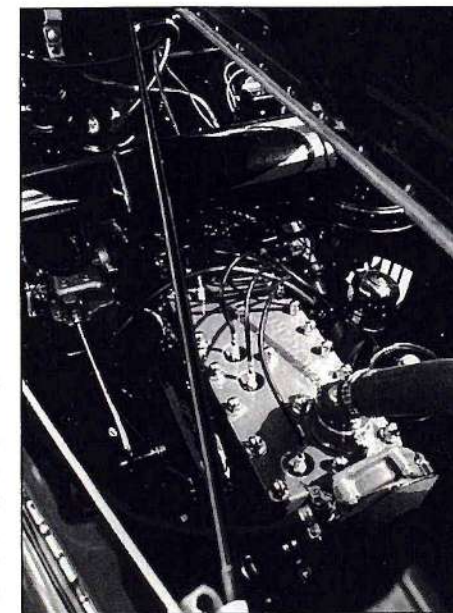
Packards International Motor Car Club

302 French Street
Santa Ana, CA 92701
714-541-8431
Dues: \$35/year; Membership: 2,500

Clipper Club Sedan in the near future. For 1941, however, the streamlined Clipper was offered only as a four-door "Touring Sedan," based on the One-Twenty chassis and priced, at \$1,420, between the One-Twenty and One-Sixty.

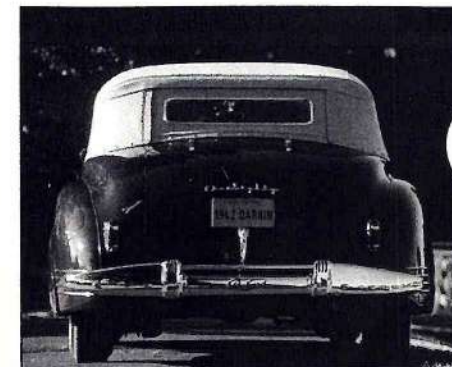
Meanwhile, the 1941 "traditional" models had received a significant face-lift. Wheelbases remained the same, but suspensions were lowered, radiators moved forward two and a half inches, and overhang stretched by five inches overall. Fenders were re-contoured, and the front fenders now incorporated the headlamps. Windows were larger and squarer, escaping the previous "porthole" look. The hood sides lost their massive louvers, but on the whole the level of chrome-plated flash had been turned up a notch. Two-tone paint was now optional; so were the running boards on short and medium-wheelbase models.

New instrument panels featured more plastic than ever, but real wood replaced wood-grained metal for the window moldings in One-Eightys. Closed One-Eightys now offered hydraulic power windows. The optional Warner Gear overdrive was now electrically controlled, eliminating the mechanical governor used in '39-40. Another significant new option was the Electromatic clutch, which used manifold vacuum to release the clutch whenever the



Silky smooth 356-cu.in. 8 makes 165hp.

driver lifted off the accelerator. The unit turned itself off above 12 mph, but drivers who shifted up into high before that speed could do so without touching the clutch pedal. Combined with overdrive, the Electromatic clutch nearly simulated an automatic transmission. City traffic was easily handled by leaving the gear lever in second with overdrive enabled, providing automatic shifting between two speeds with no need for clutching.



With the top up, rear visibility is limited.

WHAT TO PAY

Low	Average	High
\$15,000	\$60,000	\$125,000

The One-Eighty was offered in eleven body styles, five by Packard and six by independent coachbuilders. The Darrin Convertible Sedan was no longer among them, but the Convertible Victoria continued, its redesigned doors now hinged conventionally rather than suicide-style. Amazingly, so did the Sport Sedan, in its economized form, with a standard hood and radiator shell. Only a single 1941 Sport Sedan was built, and that was for a Packard executive; but 35 Victorias were assembled by Sayers and Scoville, a Cincinnati shop better known for its hearses and ambulances. The bargain-priced One-Twenty Victoria was no longer offered but, interestingly, Darrin wrung a single Victoria out of a Clipper body shell, for actor Errol Flynn. Ed Macauley had one Victoria specially built with a metal *coupe de ville*-style half-top and a removable Plexiglas panel over the driver's seat. The car also sported landau irons, and push-button door releases borrowed from a Lincoln Continental. Macauley called it the Phantom and spent the war years further refining its styling, until he had transformed it into the prototype for the "bathtub" Packard of 1948.

Overall, 1941 Senior Packard shipments fell to 3,525 One-Sixties and 930 One-Eightys. With war production a growing distraction, Packard announced its 1942 line in August 1941. In a daring gamble, the company extended the Clipper's more modern styling to the entire One-Ten and One-Twenty lines—both shortened in wheelbase to 120 inches—and to most of the 127-inch-chassis One-Sixties and C Eighties as well. All four series, in fact, now shared the same Clipper body shell from the cowl on back—differing from each other only in engine, wheelbase and trim level.

SPECIALISTS

Bill Hirsch

396 Littleton Ave.
Dept. SIA-188
Newark, NJ 07103
800-828-2061
Original upholstery material

Kanter Auto Products

76 Monroe Street
Dept. SIA-188
Boonton, NJ 07005
800-526-1096
www.kanter.com
New engine and mechanical parts, accessories, literature, repro wire wheels

Max Merritt Auto

P.O. Box 10
Dept. SIA-188
Franklin, IN 46131
800-472-2573
www.maxmerrittauto.com
NOS and repro parts and accessories

Potomac Packard

P.O. Box 117
Dept. SIA-188
Tiger, GA 30576
800-859-9532
Electrical supplies and wiring harnesses

Taylor Trim

1109 East High St.
Dept. SIA-188
New Philadelphia, OH 44663
330-343-6835
Interior upholstery and carpets

Terrill Machine Co.

Route 2, Box 61
Dept. SIA-188
DeLeon, TX 76444
254-893-2610
New engine and ignition parts

Trenton Brakes

1242 Princeton Ave
Dept. SIA-188
Trenton, NJ 08638
609-989-8600
Brake components

Tucson Packard

9101 East 22 Street
Dept. SIA-188
Tucson, AZ 85710
520-722-1984
Carb kits; new, repro and used parts and accessories

1940 PACKARD

TOWNE COUPE PARISIENNE BY DARRIN

Odd car out in the Darrin crowd

BY LEE BECK

The saga of Howard A. "Dutch" Darrin and his effect on Packard design is interesting indeed. Packard enjoyed a good reputation for being solid, and one felt it when behind the wheel. Packard's styling prowess in the late '30s, however, was another matter. Staid designs — up to that point no one ever accused a Packard of being too flashy.

Packard, of course, saw it in another light. The company defended its deliberate, conservative lines, stating — in a 'roundabout way — that while a Packard was never in style, it was never out. Customers could count on a Packard keeping its presence, at least for a few years.

Yet, the late '30s presented a problem for Packard. The art deco movement faded into the streamlining era which heavily influenced automobile styling. Never, in such a short period, has the look of the automobile ever undergone such a drastic change.

We overlook this, as WWII interrupted the styling revolution that was taking place. If automotive production had continued throughout the '40s, the change from body/fenders/running boards to the envelope body would have taken place in less than a decade.

So, while Packard may have publicly postured about the timelessness of its designs, there probably was, at least privately, a growing gut feeling that a change was needed. Packard was quickly losing ground to the competition.

Along came Dutch Darrin who decided to work a little magic on the Packard chassis. He was attracted to

Packard for good reason: Packard's reputation for building a solid car and the fact that it was the last independent manufacturer battling in the luxury car market. Intellectually, a company that managed to continue doing that after a devastating economic depression deserved a little respect. Such autonomy, such self-determination could not be ignored by Darrin.

Alvan Macauley may not have appreciated such a description of his conservative company, yet it's fitting. If you place Packard in a modern light, and if, somehow, Packard had escaped the Studebaker debacle, managed to survive into the '80s and retained its integrity as a premier automaker, the baby boomers may have flocked to the sign of the Cormorant rather than buy high-line European makes. Solid. Well-built. Timeless styling.

The styling. Hmmpf. Darrin knew how to take care of that, and while others have already told the story of how Packard and Darrin came together, it bears repeating here.

While serving a stint as a pilot during WWI, Darrin met Thomas L. Hibbard in France. In 1923, Hibbard returned to Paris in hopes of having LeBaron bodies built there (Hibbard, along with Raymond H. Dietrich founded LeBaron Carrossier). Through the shuffle, the coachworks of Hibbard & Darrin emerged.

As merely a design team, Hibbard & Darrin initially contracted out the actual coachbuilding, only later setting up a small factory in a Paris suburb. Using the showroom of a Minerva franchise in Paris,

the pair sold their creations, gracing the likes of Duesenberg, Isotta-Fraschini, Mercedes-Benz, Delage and, yes, Packard.

The worldwide economic depression that hit after 1929 did little to help the small firm's fortunes and its financial backer. Hibbard & Darrin closed its doors as a coachbuilder the following year but undertook consulting work with European and US automakers for a time. Hibbard eventually returned to the US in 1931, taking a job with GM. Darrin made a go of it as a coachbuilder again, using the Parisian Fernandez as his source of financing. He returned in 1937, opening a shop in Hollywood with the hope that the neighborhood clientele would provide a better financial base in which to circulate.

Darrin almost immediately went to work on a '37 Packard One-Twenty convertible victoria (selling it to actor Dick Powell), although the designer also experimented with a Ford. Darrin held the One-Twenty's chassis in high regard, for had he pursued building on the senior V-12 chassis, much in the same vein as he had done with Hibbard in the heady days before the Great Depression, the price tag on his creations would have been stratospheric. Darrin would also have had to retrench in a short time, as the V-12 was in its twilight years.

Production, as it were, started in earnest in 1938. Darrin had purchased a bushel basket full of business coupes from a Dallas dealership, and hired two expert metal benders to hammer out his

new creations utilizing the One-Twenty and Super 8 chassis. The less-expensive Packard chassis turned out to be a wise decision, the sluggish economy making it readily apparent high-priced automobiles were not moving.

He also knew the way to attract Packard's attention. Driving his personal convertible victoria to a dealer show at the Packard proving grounds, Darrin stole the limelight. Dealers were enthusiastic enough to persuade the Packard powers-that-be to offer the Darrin Packards through official channels, which Packard did, using upscale magazines in 1940 to promote the "Glamour Car of the Year."

Since Darrin's shop in Hollywood held little promise for increased production, the panel beating and assembly work commenced at Central Manufacturing in

Connersville, the Auburn Automobile Company's facility of late. Jeep production for the war effort pushed Darrin Packard production to Cincinnati, where Sayers & Scoville (Hess & Eisenhardt) finished out the production run from late 1940 through the following year.

Packard eventually canceled the Darrin program, although management had promised Darrin increased orders in return for his 10-day frenzy at creating a proposal for the upcoming Clipper. This supposedly soured Darrin on Packard management, but the designer still found enough in his heart to work on another proposal for Packard in 1955, though why Darrin ever decided to help is unknown.

What was really significant about the Darrin program was this: The designer

and his cars created an awareness of the importance of styling to Packard. To be sure, company management tried to console themselves with Gallup polls showing the buying public preferred the distinctiveness of a Packard, but sales started to show otherwise. In 1937, Packard produced an all-time high 109,518, dropping to less than half in 1938, with 50,260 units produced. Of course, the struggling economy hit another recession, resulting in decreased sales for most automakers. Yet, such outside forces can all too easily become a scapegoat for sagging sales while other factors are also at play. In 1931, for instance, Auburn brought out an entirely new model line and proceeded to witness its strongest sales year to date; this, in the depths of the Depression.

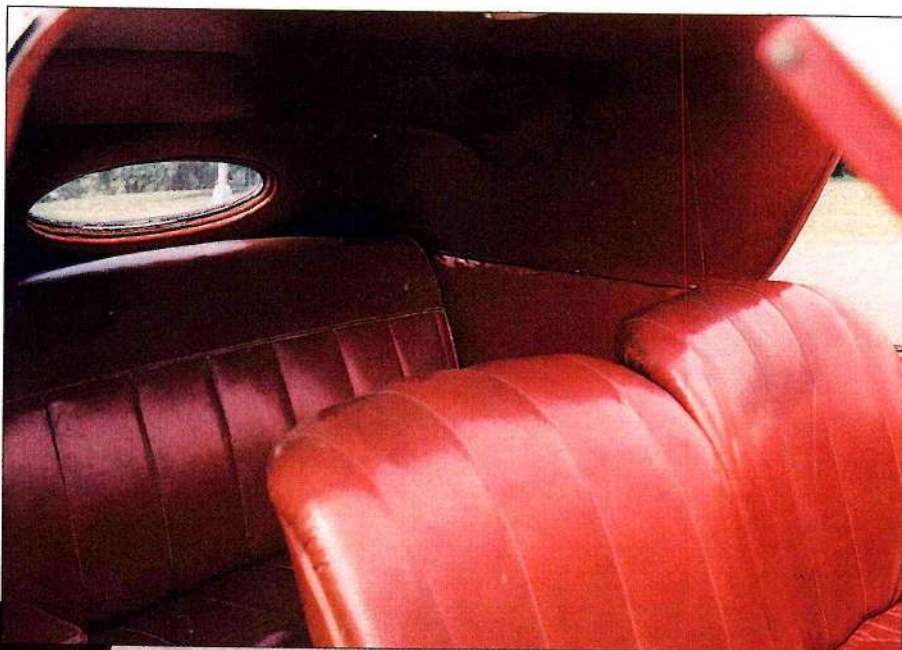


While every victory or defeat carries its own set of circumstances, Packard might — at the very least — have been able to soften the blow it took in '38 with a little more up-to-date styling. As mentioned previously, style became increasingly important to the consumer, and Packard could no longer escape it.

After Packard gained its styling awareness via the Darrins, the company proceeded along new lines with a fervor never before seen at East

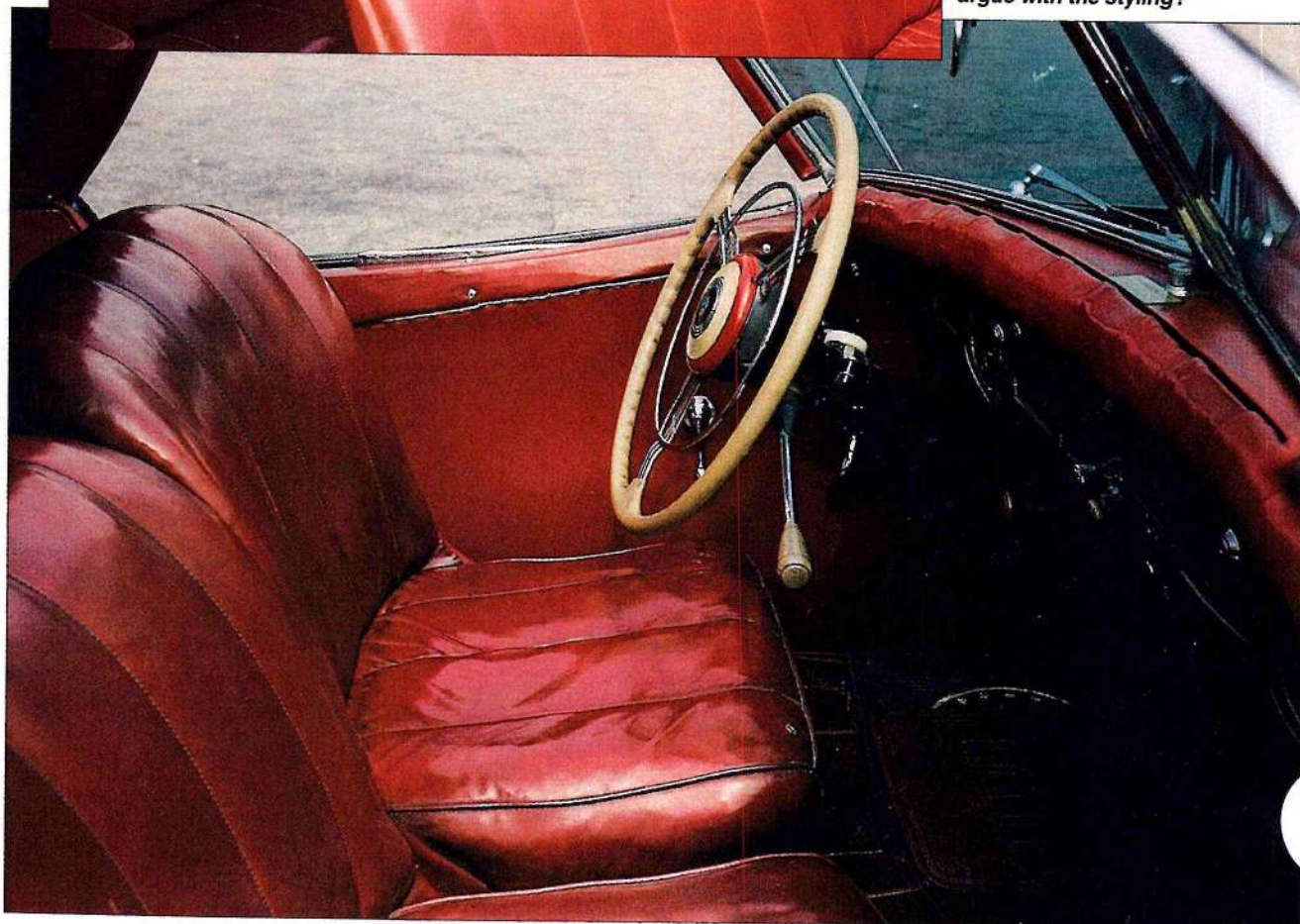
Grand Boulevard. "Stream styling" was the catch word Packard used, and its new Clipper had plenty of it. In the first year of its existence, Packard produced 16,600 Clippers, almost outpacing the One-Twenty for the year, and this with the Clipper being introduced seven months late as a '41½ model. So here, then, was a product that not only enjoyed a sound reputation, but also was cloaked with the latest in looks. This, from Packard.

With the Clipper enjoying the benefits of mass production (lower production costs thus lower retail prices) the Darrin Packards became a moot exercise and management quietly canceled the models. The Darrins had served their purpose, whetting the public's appetite for a new, sleek Packard. Perhaps the company's gains of reputation and fortunes would have increased even higher had not the outbreak of war interrupted the Clipper's production flow.



Outward appearances of this Darrin are deceiving, as the interior holds much more passenger room than readily appears. Even the long rear deck line does not take away from interior space.

Plush interiors were a hallmark of the Packard Darrin cars, and this one is no exception. The red leather is a real stand-out against the black interior. Rear visibility left something to be desired in this fixed-top Darrin, but who could argue with the styling?



Darrin, when participating in the Clipper design program, probably never thought of the new Packard as usurping his creations. It may have been a fitting segue for Darrin had Packard lived up to its promises. It didn't transpire that way.

In fact, Dutch Darrin's participation in the Clipper program has come under attack of recent. In the March 1991 issue of *The Classic Car*, Packard designer William Reithard, in an interview with Joel Prescott, dismisses Darrin's contribution: "He was a terrific personality, very likeable. We did our best to help him out. But the model we did was discarded. There just wasn't any interest in it. Dutch was not a great designer." Reithard also went on to say "[Darrin] made some very rough sketches and did considerable hand-waving..."

Loewy has been accused of the same "hand-waving," but unlike Loewy — and this is where the story becomes problematic — Darrin did not surround himself with a studio of talented designers who could make him look good. For too long Darrin had to stand on his own, so he had to possess *some* semblance of design skills. While Reithard talks at length of working with Darrin in Detroit, no mention is made of Darrin's quarter-scale model that Ed Macauley brought back with him from California after visiting Darrin. Likewise, Darrin, in the book *Packard: A History of the Motor Car and the Company*, talks of his clay model (as does Alex Tremulis upon seeing it one day at the Briggs studios) without relating his work in Detroit. Both scenarios probably occurred, but how they mesh

together is still tentative.

Also intriguing is the feature car at hand, a 1940 Packard Darrin Towne Coupe Parisienne. At casual glance it looks like any number of convertible victorias. However, the rear half of the top is made of steel with landau irons. Therefore, it is a fixed, non-removable top.

John Stuck owns the car and relates his knowledge of it thus: "To my knowledge this Darrin is the only one of this particular body style known to exist. Since I have owned the car longer than any previous owners (32 of its 54-years), and have never seen or heard of another in the many automotive publications that I have read or numerous shows and concours that I have attended, I assume no other exists.

"I received a phone call from Dutch

Landau irons gave the Darrin a distinctive look, much as they did on Ed Macauley's "Phantom" Packard, although the influence of the Streamline Era is readily apparent elsewhere on the car while the irons hark back to a much earlier age.





Only 40-some Darrins were produced at Central Manufacturing in Connersville, Indiana, hardly the makings of large-scale employment opportunities. Production shifted to Hess & Eisenhardt of Cincinnati when Jeep production took over the Connersville plant.

Darrin of Santa Monica back in the '70s requesting slides of the car, which I sent. He confirmed its existence but made no mention of others.

"The chrome hood louvers were made in my father's machine shop a number of years ago when I had not been able to locate the correct louvers at the time, and wanted to... alleviate a possible over-heating problem."

It is indeed an interesting Darrin, confirmed by the designer himself, but doesn't add much to clear the mystery. The car is a 1940 Super 8, but the top is exactly like that on one of Ed Macauley's 1941 One-Eighty styling test-beds.

Joel Prescott, in the above mentioned article, incorrectly identifies the Macauley car as a "convertible victoria," although a technically-correct identification is difficult to ascertain. Hugo Pfau, in his book, *The Coachbuilt Packard*, calls it a "coupe de ville." With Stuck's Darrin, the half-hardtop qualifies as a town car, but with two doors the "towne coupe" designation gains credence.

Prescott goes on to say that the Macauley car was built from "... a Dutch Darrin design. Macauley had the landau irons added, a detail Darrin would have despised." Yet, Darrin never mentioned the reprehensibility of this feature on Stuck's car in his phone conversation to the owner. Coincidentally, Pfau also attributes the

Macauley car to Darrin, stating, "Darrin himself modified this body...."

George Hamlin and Dwight Heinmuller, writing in the Packard book previously mentioned, discusses the Macauley car thus: "...[Macauley] was driving a custom-built Packard known as the Phantom, or (at East Grand Boulevard) the 'dog car.' Originally built in 1941 by Hess & Eisenhardt, the Phantom began life as a One-Eighty Darrin-esque landaulet with a transparent roof panel over the driver, pushbutton doors, and dummy landau irons." The writers only gave the Phantom a "Darrin-esque" rating, falling short of fully attributing the car to Darrin.

The Phantom went through numerous changes before Macauley had a custom speedster built for himself in 1952. Thus, we can assume the Phantom went out of active duty since the trail ends there. Conversely, little is known of Stuck's Towne Coupe Parisienne prior to his purchasing it in 1962. So, this is where the questions arise.

Throughout the numerous changes wrought on the Phantom, one constant remained: the half roof and landau irons. Therefore, it is conceivable that the Phantom was disassembled, but somehow the roof and irons made their way into the hands of the owner of a convertible victoria desiring to make his car a little different from the rest. This is the premise

Stuck puts forth and has some circumstantial evidence to back it up. Stuck purchased the Darrin from his mechanic, who in turn took it out of Michigan.

Yet, what of the name badges, the "Towne Coupe Parisienne?" Could the name and emblem have been created by a latter-day customizer? Certainly the emblems present no problem in terms of being manufactured by anyone at a later date, but they look authentic for the period. Too, someone did a credible job of naming the body style, as only a designer would be apt to do. Thus, the design and name could have been created as one entity... in 1940. Built in Connersville, it's possible the unique Darrin served as a starting point for the Phantom. Perhaps more than one top was formed.

Stuck doesn't believe Macauley would have lifted such a styling cue verbatim, but then again, Macauley was an administrator with a feel for styling, not a stylist. Whatever the case, it goes without mentioning that Stuck is most interested in hearing from anyone who might be able to shed further light on his unique Darrin.

Stuck's Towne Coupe Parisienne is a unique car from a unique designer in the always unique — though sometimes muddied — world of automotive history. Although others have previously told much of the saga, the story remains unfinished. We can't wait to read how it all ends.



1942 Packard One-Eighty

Darrin Victoria

An Owner's Tale



This is better than the old car in the barn story. This is the old car in the barn and the original owner still in the house story. Much better. Rarely, if ever, does one find a car nearly a half century old still in the possession of the first owner. Packard collector, restorer and author, Robert Turnquist, did just that.

The story of Turnquist's 1942 Packard Darrin came to light last year when I visited Hibernia Auto in New Jersey. I had come to profile him for a new series on collectors, and in casual conversation he mentioned that the Darrin I was going to photograph was originally owned by a woman who lived just a half mile away. You can imagine my surprise when he said she was still alive. "She was 81 when I bought the car from her in 1981," said Turnquist. We decided that there could be no better place to photograph the Darrin than at the home where this grand old Packard victoria had resided for most of its life.

When we arrived at Mildred McEwan's home, the caretaker looked at Turnquist, "I remember you, you bought the Darrin." It seems that the caretaker had started working for the McEwans with his father in the early '40s and remembered the times Turnquist had come by to see the car. Mrs. McEwan was still living in her home at age 94, however, she was now bedridden.

BY ROBERT TURNQUIST AND DENNIS ADLER

Dennis Adler photos



Sitting comfortably in the driveway of this old farm house is natural for this 1942 Packard Darrin; this is where it resided for its first 40 years before being bought by current and second owner, Robert Turnquist.

now sits in the field rusting away."

The Packard Darrin was probably retired in 1961—the year of the last inspection sticker on the windshield. Turnquist says that the car was placed in the garage, and that is where it remained until 1981, when he finally purchased it.

"Since 1946, when I returned from the service, I mentally had a spot in my garage for the Darrin. However, I didn't approach the McEwans until 1961 about selling the car. I felt that if they said yes, I wouldn't have enough money. When I did finally ask them, their answer was no, but if they ever decided to sell, I could buy it. That was encouragement! However, as it turned out, selling old

cars was the farthest thing from his mind," says Turnquist, recounting the incredible tale of financial misfortunes that befell McEwan in the 1960s.

"McEwan's friendly family stockholders sold the mills out from under him. Two years later he took in a young partner to help run the railroad. Through a series of devious maneuvers the young man got control of the company and within two years the once successful Morristown Erie Railroad was bankrupt and the young man was facing criminal charges. All of this had a disastrous effect on McEwan's mind. One day he wandered off into the woods and they eventually found him sitting under a tree at the far end of his property. He was placed in a nursing home where he eventually passed away at age 79.

A short-wave radio, the K-steering wheel, automatic electric clutch, overdrive, directional signals and backup light.



"Mildred and Richard McEwan were married in their early 20s and had purchased their 28-acre farm known as *Blue Gate* in 1928. They were very nice people and Mrs. McEwan is the only link I have to my past in the neighborhood," says Turnquist, holding on to the ephemeral image of his youth and the old wooden garage where he had first seen the Packard so many years before.

"Richard McEwan had six brothers and they owned the McEwan Mills in Whippany, New Jersey. In their heyday, they employed half the people in Whippany. In addition, Mr. McEwan owned a box factory in Newark, New Jersey, was the sole owner of the Morristown Erie RR, and CEO of the Board of the Whippany Bank.

"His wife finished high school and then took up the gentle pursuit of painting china, playing the piano, horseback riding and social teas. I once asked her why she didn't go to college. She said, 'Young ladies of my era were not sent to college.'

"My first meeting with the McEwans was in 1940. My parents had purchased a 40-acre farm which was a half-mile away. Both farms were being raided by wild dogs that year and they were killing our sheep. That was the catalyst that brought my family and the McEwans together," recalls Turnquist.

Being a Packard lover since he was a youth in the '30s, the thing that impressed Turnquist most about the McEwans was their garage and the three Packards that filled it. "They had a black 1934 Super 8 sedan, a yellow 1936 Twelve victoria and a black 1939 120 business coupe for Mrs. McEwan."

Each November, the Twelve was picked up by Morristown Packard, put in a DL & W box car and shipped to Florida for the winter. "The McEwans spent every winter at 'The Breakers' in Palm Beach."

In 1941, the business coupe was traded in on a new One-Twenty station wagon for Mrs. McEwan and Mr. McEwan ordered the 1942 Packard victoria by Darrin. His order was one of the earliest and he received the first chassis off the 1942 line, fitted with the first 1942 Darrin body from Hess & Eisenhardt. The hand-painted white letters 2001 painted on the right front frame rail and the left rear frame rail stand as mute testimony to this fact.

The color ordered was Miami Sand with a maroon Haartz cloth top, red interior, and was equipped with a short-wave radio, the K-steering wheel, automatic



"Mrs. McEwan visited the nursing home everyday to care for his personal needs. On several occasions she asked if she could sell the Darrin to me and he would always say no. Mrs. McEwan told me that in retrospect, selling the Packard to anyone represented his reaction to someone trying to take away another prized possession.

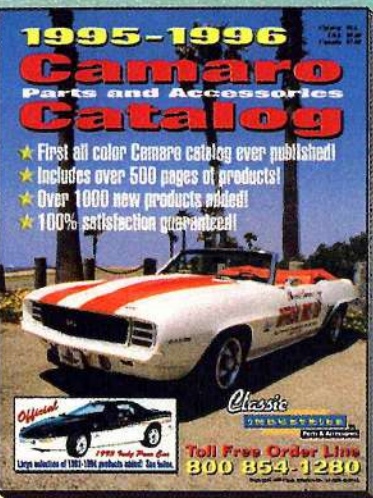
"Once a year I would visit with her and we would talk about selling the Darrin and the station wagon in the garage. She would say to me, 'sharpen your pencil, Robert!' Then one summer day in 1981, she called and said she wanted me down immediately to buy the cars. I told her I would be there in 35 minutes. I arrived 10 minutes late. Now remember, she is 81 years old at the time, and she says 'Where were you, stuck in heavy traffic?'"

After years of being told "no," Turnquist was curious as to the reason for the sudden change of heart. "I asked her why she was in such a hurry to sell them and she replied that every time the caretaker would open the garage doors to get a tool, a passerby would see one of the cars, drive in and ask if they were for sale. She found this problem very unnerving.

"After restoring the Darrin, I drove over to Mrs. McEwan's house and asked her if she would like a ride, but got the usual 'No.' Over the years, I would occasionally stop by to say hello and on one occasion she allowed me to go through her husband's personal files to look for car pictures. There was not one car picture of any description to be found." Whatever importance these cars had held for Richard McEwan, it had resided solely within the man, and when he died, so, too, did their meaning.

Says Turnquist of this stunning example of Classic sporting elegance, "We who own Classic cars rarely know the original owners, let alone know them personally. I was lucky!"

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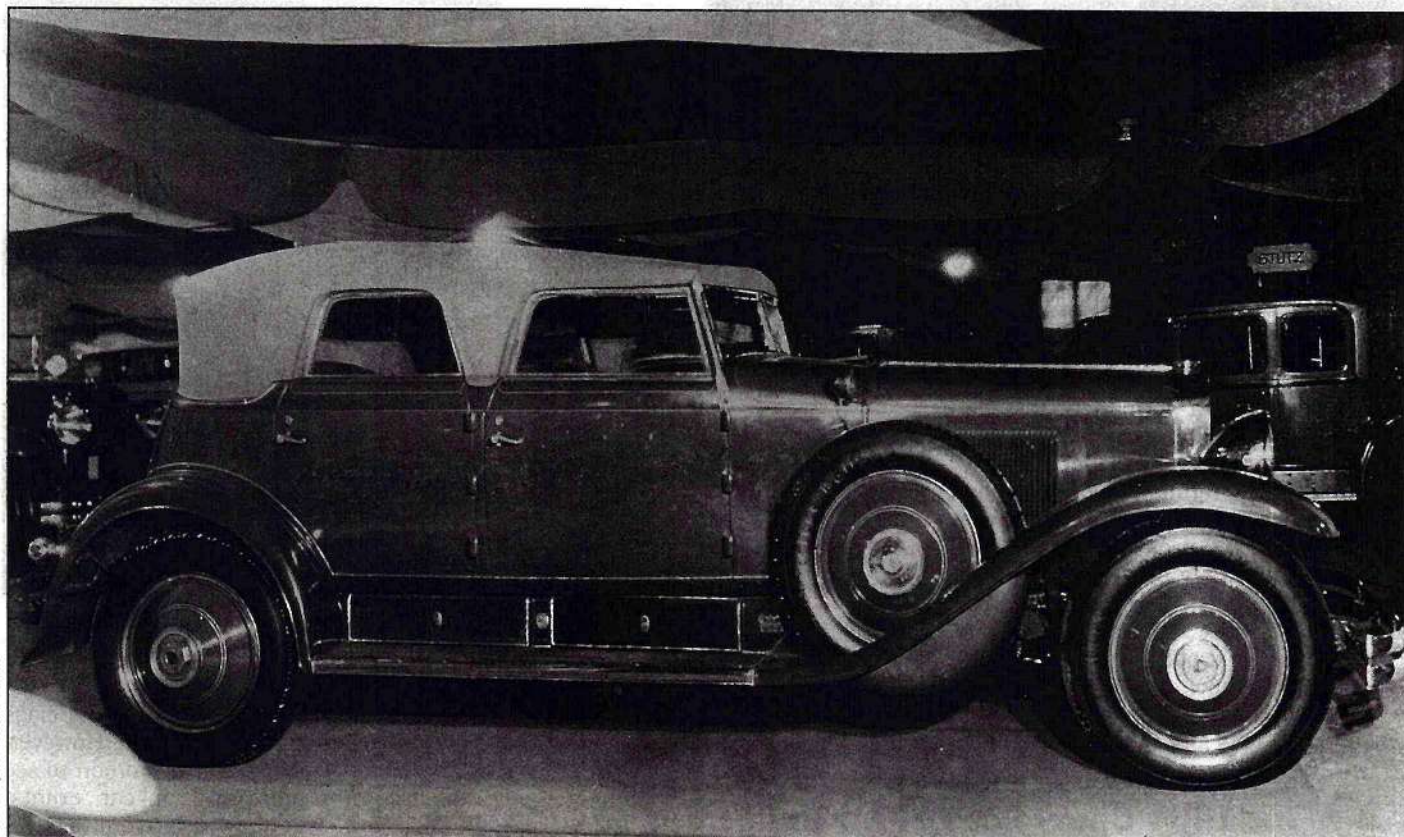
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PART IV: HIBBARD & DARRIN



courtesy of Dave Hollis

(Taken from the book *A Century of Automotive Style: 100 Years of American Car Design*, by Michael Lamm and Dave Hollis.)

by Michael Lamm

LE BARON spun off not just Dietrich Inc. but also, in 1923, Hibbard & Darrin. And although H&D was based in Paris, the company turned out to be very influential in American car design. But let's backtrack a moment and take a closer look at H&D's two young principals, Tom Hibbard and Dutch Darrin.

Fresh out of high school, Thomas L. Hibbard went to work for French-born auto designer/coachbuilder/manufacture Leon Rubay in early 1916. Rubay had been hired a few years earlier by White in Cleveland to style and build their production bodies and hired Hibbard on the strength of Hibbard's masterfully done car renderings.

The next year, the C.P. Kimball & Co. in Chicago hired Hibbard away from Rubay and gave him free rein as a de-

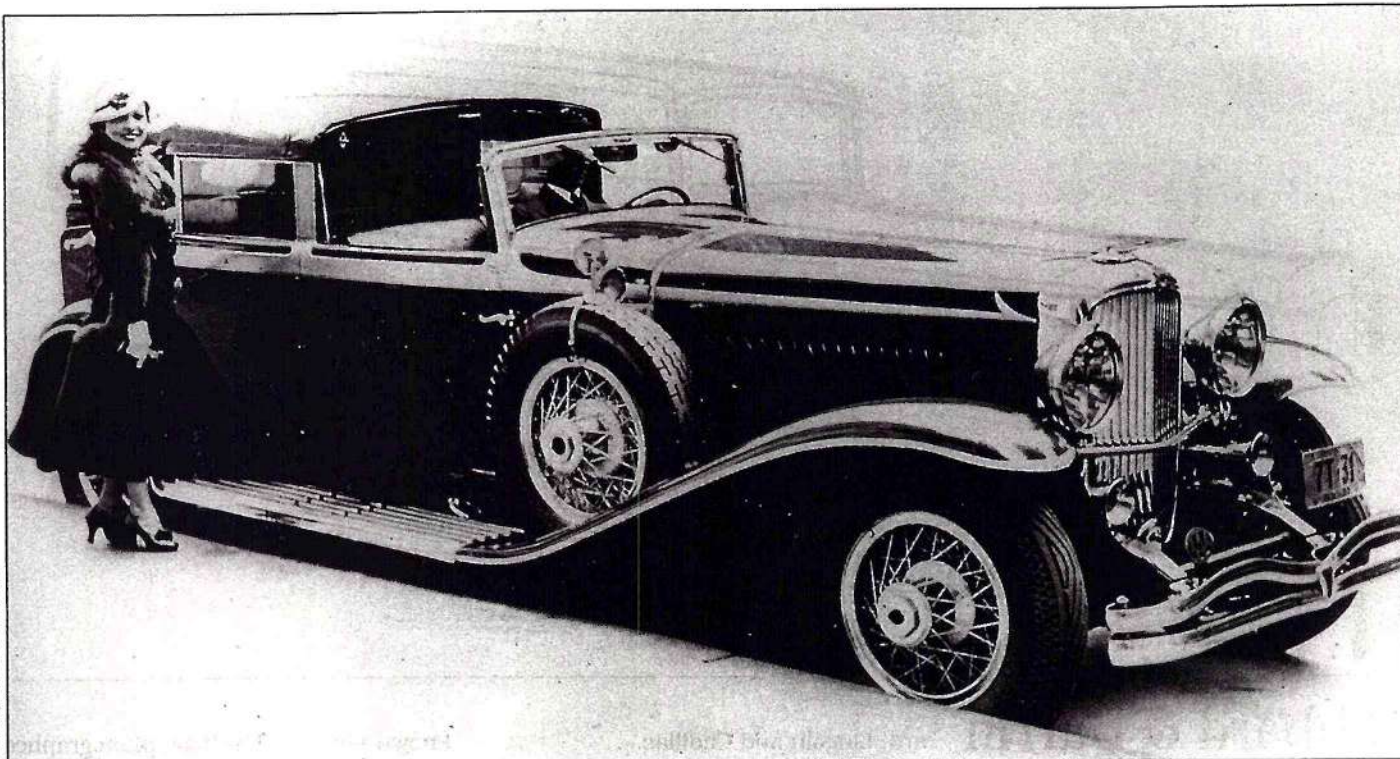
signer. As one of his duties at Kimball, Hibbard took his portfolio on the road and became something of a door-to-door salesman. He sold Kimball's custom bodies to Midwestern auto dealers and wealthy private customers. Hibbard was still with Kimball when the United States entered World War I. He enlisted in the Army Signal Corps and was shipped off to France. It was there that he learned to speak French. After the war, the Paris coachbuilder Kellner et Freres offered Hibbard a job, but the army wouldn't release him, and he had to go back to the U.S. to muster out.

Discharged in early 1919, Hibbard took a job as a designer/draftsman with Brewster & Co. in New York. At the drawing board next to him sat Ray Dietrich, who'd already been with Brewster

for a number of years. The two young men became friends, and during shared lunches, Hibbard and Dietrich both decided to leave Brewster. When Willie Brewster heard about Dietrich and Hibbard's plans, he fired them both (see SIA #152), whereupon they established LeBaron Carrossiers (SIA #153).

How Dutch Darrin initially met Hibbard remains unclear. In his autobiography in *The Classic Car*, Ray Dietrich said that Hibbard and Darrin had known each other in Europe during the war. Hibbard, however, contended that it was in the LeBaron offices that he first met Darrin. According to Hibbard, Darrin came in one day and proposed the idea of having American-designed custom bodies built in Europe and shipped here. At that time, European chassis cost less overseas, and overseas coachbuilders also charged considerably lower labor rates.

LeBaron's third partner, Ralph Roberts, however, mentioned that Darrin had been working with a fellow in New York named "Tiny" (Roberts could-



n't remember Tiny's last name). Tiny bought and sold used luxury cars, and Darrin helped him. It was in that capacity that Darrin visited the LeBaron offices, but he never commissioned any bodies.

At any rate, in 1923, Paul Ostruk, a sometime coachbuilder and the New York Minerva agent, asked LeBaron to design two bodies for him. The LeBaron-designed Ostruk bodies were to be built in Brussels, where coachbuilding rates were far lower than here, and then shipped to New York. Since Hibbard spoke French and had no personal commitments, it made sense to send him to Brussels to oversee construction of the Ostruk bodies. Roberts, in fact, remembered buying Hibbard a third-class

steamship ticket and explained that money was still tight at LeBaron at that time.

The LeBaron partners decided that while Hibbard was overseas anyway, why not open a branch office in Paris? The plan had three parts: 1) Tom would see how much money could be saved by building bodies in Belgium, 2) he'd see whether there was a demand for independent design work in Europe and 3) he would try to find a Paris address for LeBaron as prestigious as 2 Columbus Circle. Hibbard left for Paris in the spring of 1923.

Hibbard found that conditions overseas looked amazingly good. Europe was revitalizing after World War I, and wealthy Europeans needed new cars.

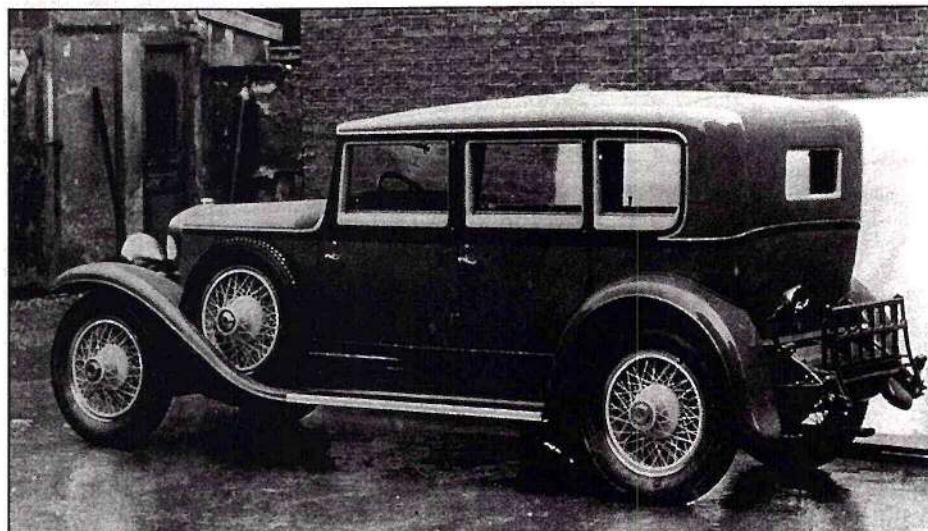
Hibbard also found that chassis like Rolls-Royce, Hispano-Suiza and Minerva were considerably less expensive on the continent than in America, because US importers, including Paul Ostruk, shamelessly doubled and tripled wholesale prices.

Better yet, none of Europe's luxury carmakers produced factory bodies. Customers had to contract for coachwork with independent builders. And Hibbard did find an address for LeBaron's Paris office, in the Rue de Berg near the Champs Elysees. Back in the United States, LeBaron went so far as to print new letterhead with "New York and Paris" on it.

But at that point, Hibbard somehow bumped into Dutch Darrin. Roberts felt they probably just ran into each other at the Ritz bar in Paris, that famous watering hole where Americans wet their whistles. Roberts speculated that they started talking and Darrin, accomplished salesman that he was, convinced Hibbard to leave LeBaron and go into business with him.

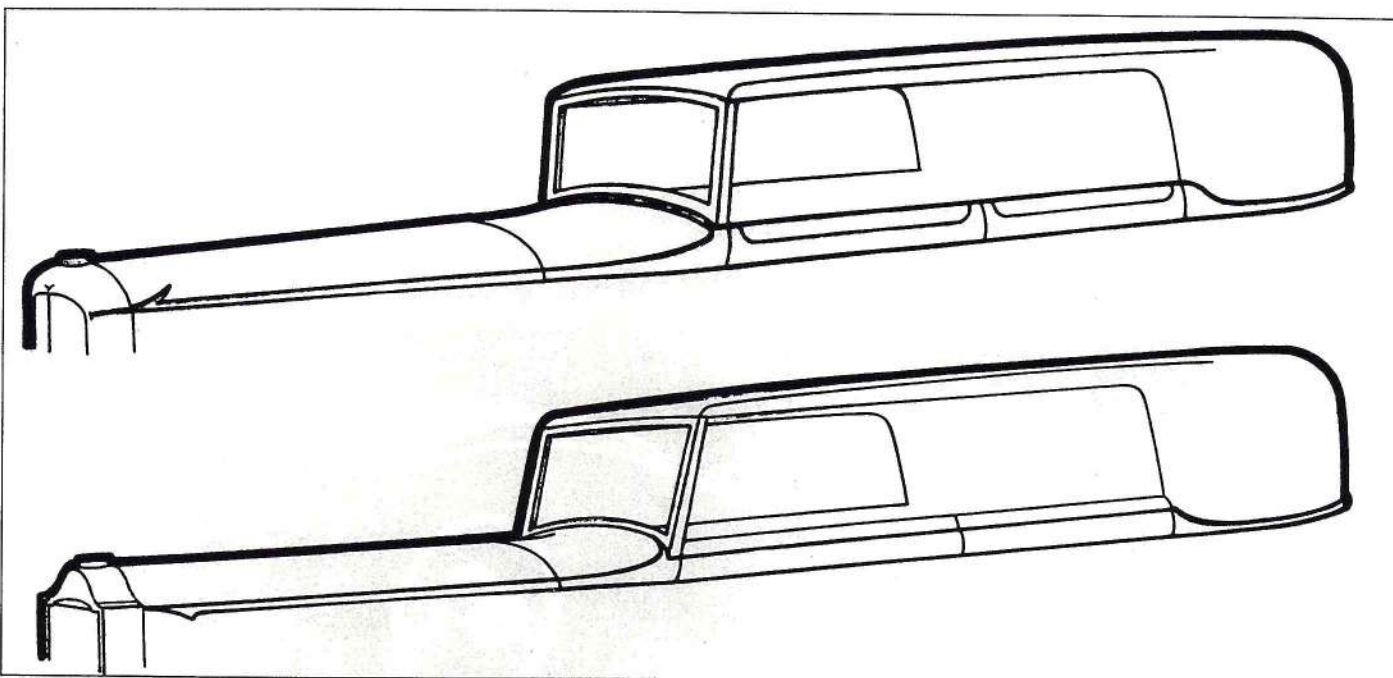
The two Americans soon rented a showroom across the Champs Elysees from Kellner et Freres and started the same type of design business in Paris that LeBaron was doing in New York. LeBaron itself never did open a Paris office and eventually used its "New York and Paris" letterhead as scrap paper.

The firm of Hibbard & Darrin, meanwhile, took on the Minerva franchise in Paris. In their Minerva salesroom, the two designers could show potential customers original sketches, and they sometimes rendered these as part of their sales presentations. Generally speaking, rich Europeans accepted rad-



Facing page: H&D's elegant and innovative torpedo convertible sedan body style was used on many luxury cars. 1928 Cadillac is shown. **This page, top:** A stunning Duesenberg with one of the clever but troublesome Sylentlyte bodies. **Above:** H&D's design proposal for LaSalle.

drawings by Bill Dobson



Hibbard & Darrin

continued

ical styling more readily than their American counterparts.

H&D contracted initially with two Belgian coachbuilders, Van den Plas and d'Ieteren, to build Minerva custom bodies to their specifications. Business was soon going along nicely, and Hibbard recalled later that nearly half of all their cars were sold to wealthy North and South Americans passing through Paris. These travelers took out customs permits that somehow exempted them from paying duties.

Minerva's fortunes, however, soon began to sag, so H&D sold the franchise and opened a body operation of their own in the industrial Paris suburb of Puteaux. The Puteaux "plant" occupied an open courtyard inside a huge apartment complex, and H&D at one point employed as many as 200 workers. All were skilled panel beaters, sometimes hammering away on as many as 50 cars at a time. Hibbard said that the noise was horrible. Many of H&D's designs went to French auto dealers, and Paris had agents who not only handled the top European makes like Rolls-Royce, Mercedes and Hisso but also American luxury nameplates such as Duesenberg, Pack-

ard, Lincoln and Cadillac.

The flamboyant Dutch Darrin and the quieter, more reserved Tom Hibbard were held in high esteem by wealthy French car buyers, partly because of their exotic American backgrounds and partly through their success in the system of French concours d'elegance. Concours were especially popular with young continental socialites. These events were held throughout the 1920s and thirties in places like Nice, Cannes, Monte Carlo and Paris. Judges awarded gold, silver and bronze medals on the basis of design excellence and craftsmanship.

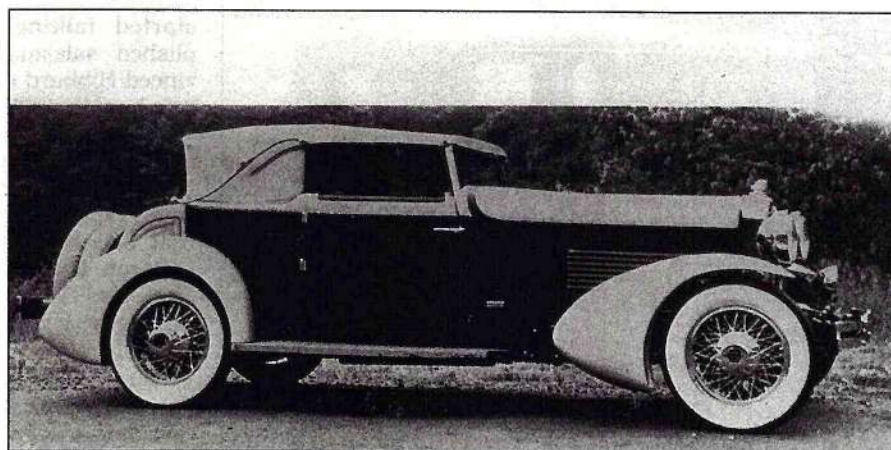
Entrants were not usually the coachbuilders but rather the car owners themselves. Owners often asked coachbuilders to design and construct bodies specifically for a given concours, and these were mostly done on tight deadlines. The grand prix winners—necessarily wealthy and usually widely

known—were admiringly photographed and talked about in the European press. Europe's prestigious concours served as models for our current concours d'elegance for collectible cars.

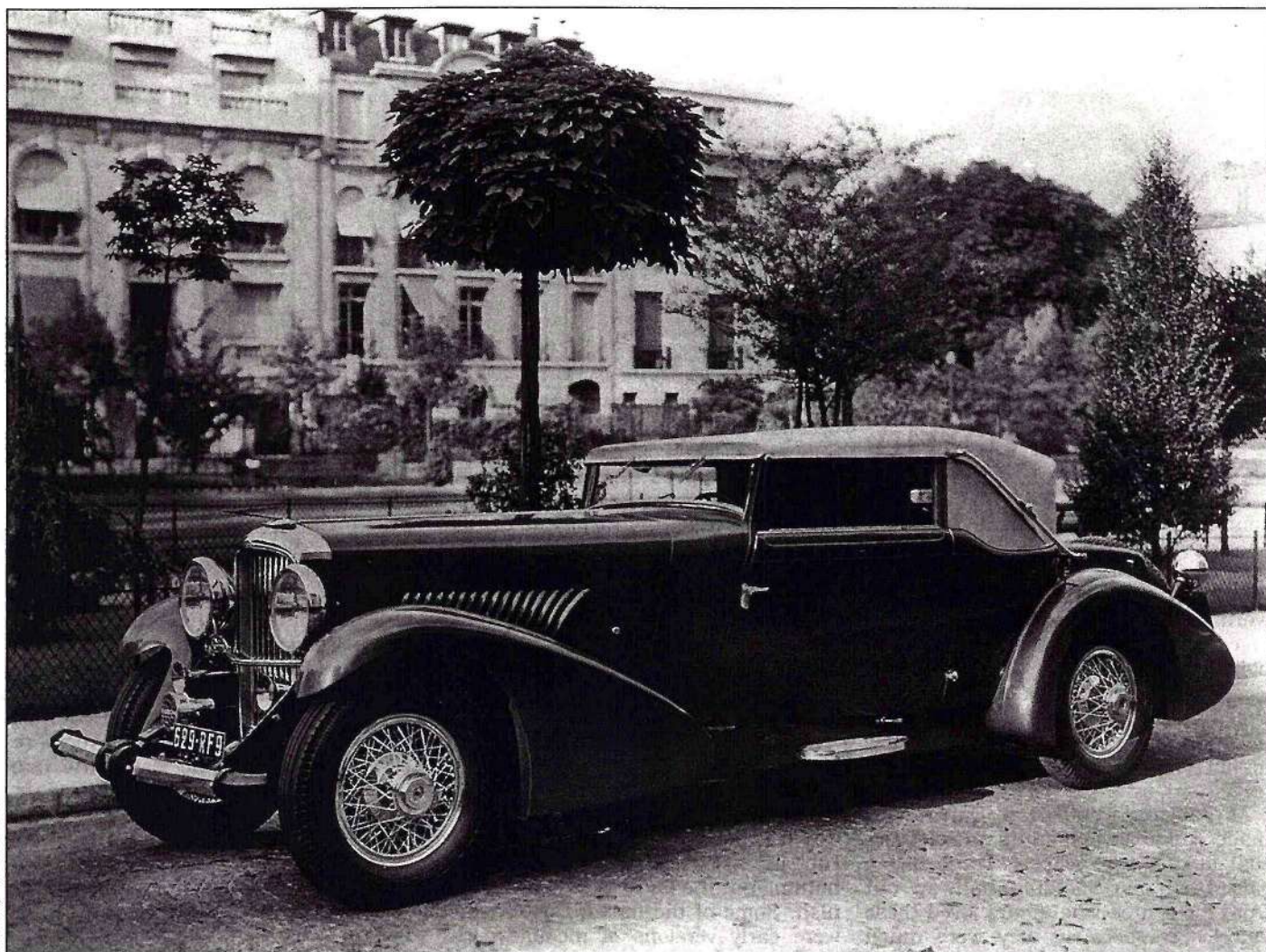
Hibbard & Darrin's clientele included such notables as Marion Davies, Gloria Swanson, movie heroine Pearl White, fashion model Kay Aldridge, Hope Hampton, the Lazard banking family, Spain's King Alphonse XIII, Patino the Bolivian tin king, plus the usual royalty, career diplomats, magnates and entertainers.

Hibbard & Darrin had a flair for developing new and widely copied body innovations. One was an applied aluminum molding that swept back from the front of the hood through to the back of the cowl, where it split, one branch lapping up and over ahead of the windshield and the other continuing along the doors, finally wrapping around the rear of the body. H&D received a European design

patent on this molding, and General Motors later used it on some of its European cars, apparently without permission. In 1932, after Hibbard & Darrin had gone out of business and perhaps as an informal out-of-court settlement (this is speculation), GM gave Tom Hibbard a two-year contract to work in Art & Colour, while Darrin apparently took cash and stayed in Paris.



Top: Spear-like applied molding was a H&D trademark. They allowed Packard to use it in "upside down" form for years. **Above:** Fabulous Stutz borrowed from racing aircraft wheel spats for fender treatment. **Facing page:** Fernandez and Darrin attracted a celebrity clientele. This Duesenberg was designed for Greta Garbo.



One detail of the H&D hood molding was that with Duesenbergs and a few other cars, the leading point just behind the radiator shell had a little upward barb. This barb became an H&D hallmark, as did the molding itself. On Packards, the barb projected downward and had the shape of half an arrowhead. Packard executives liked this so much that, in 1930, they began making the half arrowhead a hood-side feature of their production cars. Darrin said later that a Packard representative had approached him in Paris and admired the barb. He asked whether Hibbard & Darrin would sell Packard rights to the design. "If you like it," Darrin told him, "you take it for Packard and use it. We don't want any money for it. It's yours."

Another of H&D's innovations was what Darrin called the "torpedo" body. This was a handsome, barrel-sided, dual-cowl phaeton that had a snug-sealing fabric top. The top was unusual in that it used V-shaped flaps over the centerposts and small, trapezoidal side windows. With roll-up windows, this top design transformed the dual-cowl phaeton from what was usually a drafty rain barrel into a livable body type. H&D again took out a design patent, this time worldwide, and licensed rights to Der-

ham in the United States, Castagna in Italy and Gill in England. Other coachbuilders soon offered H&D's torpedo phaeton, too, but without authorization.

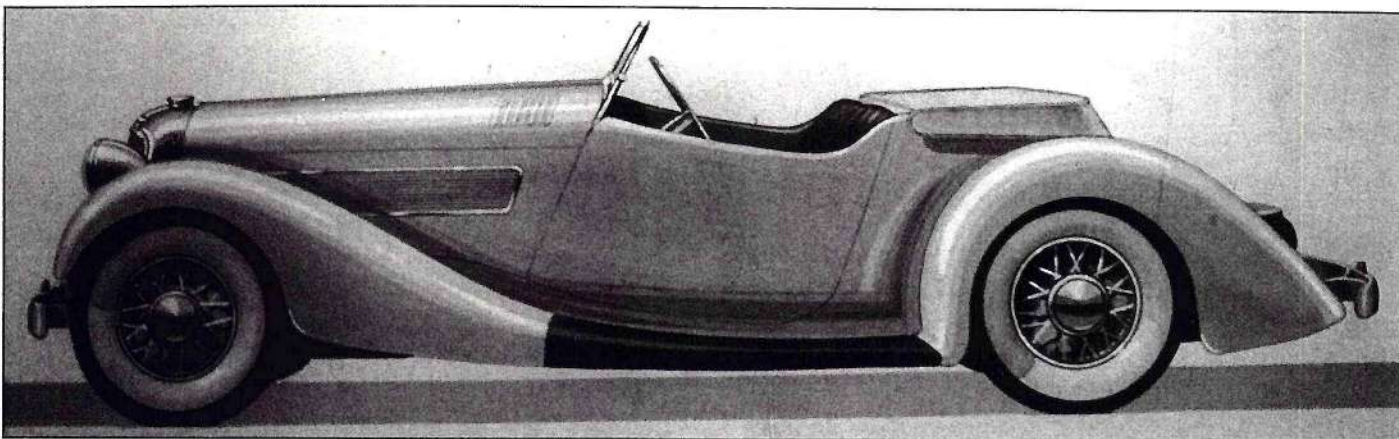
H&D's most spectacular idea had to do with making complete bodies from thin-wall aluminum castings. The framework for these H&D aluminum bodies was cast integrally with the skins. Hibbard felt that the wooden framing in custom bodies made most coachbuilt cars far too heavy. Excess weight handicapped performance. He admired Weymann's fabric bodies for their silence and lightness and Lancia's unitized, all-steel, monocoque construction for its strength. So he and Darrin, along with a financial partner named William Brokaw, decided to offer what they called "Sylentlyte" bodies. (The idea wasn't entirely new. Pierce-Arrow had offered cast-aluminum body skins from about 1910 to 1919, but these still used a wooden framework, although the wood in P-A bodies was generally lighter than in steel-skinned composite construction.)

Hibbard & Darrin's Sylentlyte bodies were made up of 10 individually cast Al-pax aluminum sections. Since most large European and American cars of the late 1920s were similar in size, one

set of castings, with minor alterations, would fit all. The trick to mounting these bodies on a variety of chassis was to use a sandwich of long wooden shims between the frame rails and the bottom of the aluminum body sections. These shims were hand shaped to conform to the different, irregular top surfaces of various chassis frames. Long, L-shaped aluminum strips covered the wooden shims and hid them from sight.

H&D's 10 main castings formed an open four-door convertible body. For the normal cloth top, H&D used hollow metal bows instead of the conventional, heavier wooden ones. The partners also offered a closed Sylentlyte four-door sedan body style. For this, they cast a separate roof assembly that bolted to the main body section. The cast roof had a fabric top insert.

H&D's Sylentlyte bodies held several advantages over then-normal composite construction. They were lightweight, didn't creak or rattle and couldn't rust. On the minus side, patterns and molds were excruciatingly difficult to make, and some of the thin, large castings often contained flaws or voids. To complicate matters, H&D sometimes had to match cowl or front-door castings to pre-existing hood shapes. Front doors



Hibbard & Darrin

continued

sometimes had to be made longer or shorter, depending on the chassis. Custom front doors necessitated forming sheet aluminum over a wooden framework, meaning that some of the advantages of Sylentlyte were lost. Nor did paint adhere well to the aluminum. Besides, Sylentlyte bodies were very expensive to manufacture. So after considerable development work but few actual sales, H&D abandoned the project.

At Puteaux, Hibbard & Darrin also made a line of aluminum wheelcovers that fit over wire wheels. These had a raised circular molding halfway out from the center. Chauffeurs loved these wheelcovers because they were much easier to keep clean than wire wheels. H&D wheelcovers could be polished to a high luster and soon became popular in all countries. Rival coachbuilders often bought them and added them to their own catalogues. Other items that H&D designed and manufactured included outside door handles, spare-tire mirror attachments, and a five-sided lug nut to prevent the theft of expensive wheels.

One crusade H&D advanced on the concours circuit was the use of lighter colors for formal body styles. This went against common practice, and H&D had only partial success. They particularly promoted a grey-green, called almond, plus shades of beige, yellow and a roof-tile red. These stood out from the traditional drab blacks, dark blues, greens, and dusky grays that were usually seen at concours.

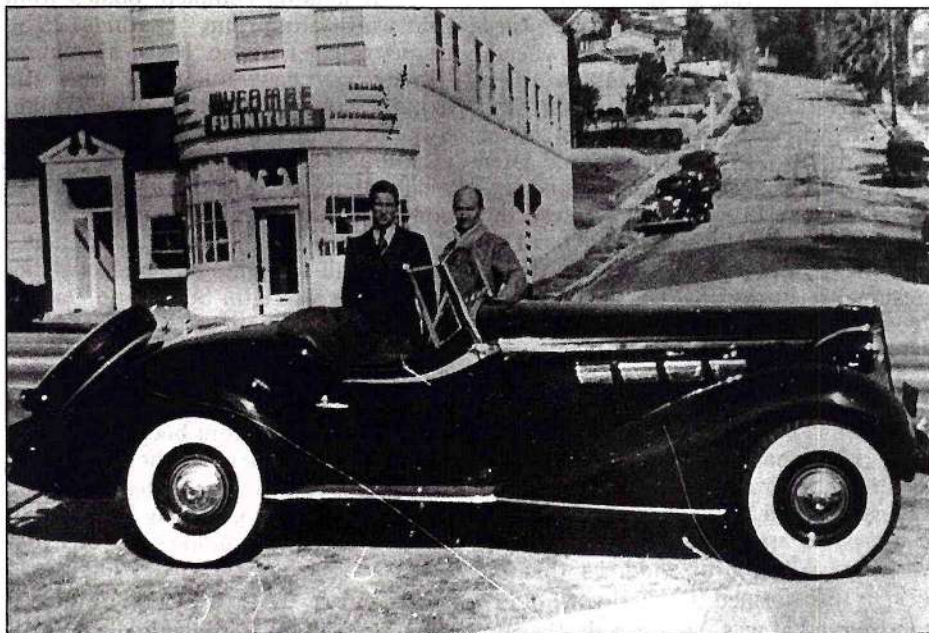
In a 1966 article, Tom Hibbard wrote in *The Classic Car*: "The transformation from paint and varnish to [nitro]cellulose lacquer came after we opened our body shop [in Puteaux]. Cellulose lacquers saved us time and money and gave the buyer a more durable finish, but it could never approach the rich color and depth of finish we had obtained with paint and varnish. To do a good job with the latter material required from two to three weeks,

because much time was needed to dry the successive coats. After the color coats were applied over the base coats, the car was varnished. Several days were required for the varnish to dry and harden. When the process was complete (if the job had been done with the best materials and skill), the resultant finish was deep and lustrous. It was much richer looking than the finishes on the production cars today, where the color is just on the surface, with no effect of depth."

Dust was always a problem when varnishing a car. H&D set up their paint room so it was completely sealed and tiled on all walls, ceiling and floor. This way it could be washed down regularly. Hibbard also reported that they used nothing but the finest British coach varnish. Some of the finishes they offered were early versions of metallics, with large metal flakes too big to pass through the nozzle of a paint gun. With varnish, though, this was no problem, because it was always brushed on. Hibbard reports, too, that Barker & Co. in England would sometimes woodgrain

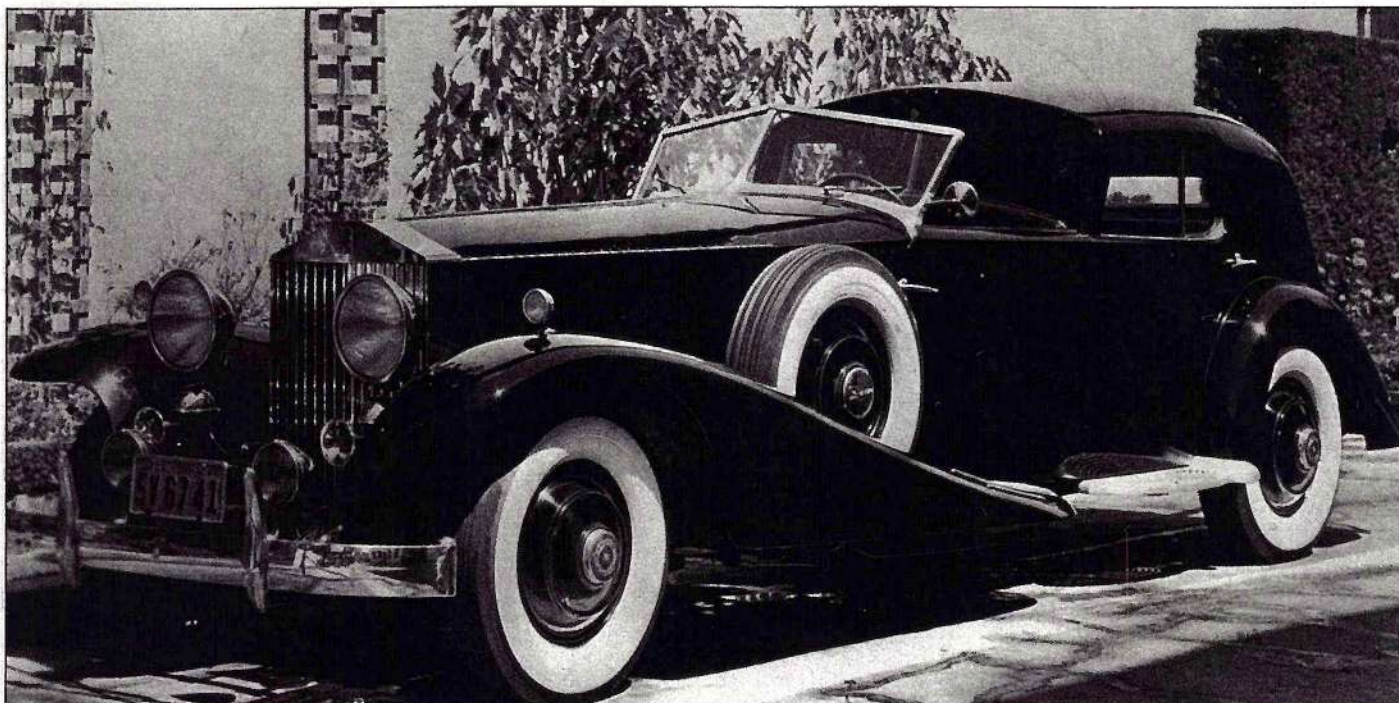
the entire exterior surface of some cars for an odd but very striking effect.

In the late 1920s, H&D's reputation was such that production carmakers began asking them to design and build sample bodies that could be mass produced. Among those for whom H&D provided design services and sample bodies were Moon, General Motors, Stutz, Auburn, Dodge, Renault and Armstrong-Siddeley. For Moon Motors Corp., H&D designed the entire 1929 Windsor White Prince line. In the case of General Motors, in 1928 H&D's showroom received a visit from no less a trio than GM board chairman Alfred P. Sloan, Jr., Chevrolet president William S. Knudsen and Harley J. Earl, head of Fisher Body's fledgling Art & Colour section. Sloan and Knudsen commissioned H&D to design, style and build five sample bodies: one Chevrolet, two Cadillacs, a LaSalle and either a Pontiac or an Oldsmobile (memories differ). During this visit, Harley Earl quite naturally felt left out. Many years later, Tom Hibbard confided that Earl took him aside and told him not to spend too much time on this



Top: Tom Hibbard designed this sporty roadster for possible production by Harry A. Miller. What a combo that would have been with one of Miller's powerhouses under the hood!
Above: Dutch Darrin with his first Packard Darrin, designed and built in 1937.

courtesy of Dave Hollis



assignment. And although the five sample bodies were quickly designed, built and delivered, GM never used any of H&D's styling ideas.

In its June 1929 issue, *Autobody* magazine reported that, "The success of Hibbard & Darrin is not based merely on designing ability, but is the result of a combination of experience, organization and experimentation. Their designing ability we need say nothing of, as their work is known all over the world. Regarding their organization, they have an entire building... in the artistic center of Paris, in which they employ numerous designers, sculptors and draftsmen for the interpretation of their creations. Working for a worldwide clientele and with the important automobile factories of Europe and America, the scope and character of their work is necessarily extremely broad. Probably the greatest factor in their success in the creation of workable and practical designs has been their large experimental facilities. Hibbard & Darrin built last year over \$1 million worth of samples in special bodies, and even large manufacturers do not generally have the organization necessary for similar experimentation."

In late 1929, Hibbard & Darrin considered open-

ing a branch office in New York. But the Sylentlyte project and H&D's New York representative were taking great amounts of money, and then came the stock-market crash. Hibbard & Darrin's financial partner in France, William Brokaw, refused to extend the two active partners more credit, and the firm folded in 1931. Its unfinished commissions were carried out by Felber Freres of Paris.

Tom Hibbard and Dutch Darrin stayed in Paris for a time, operating a moviehouse that showed American films. In late 1931, Hibbard returned to the United States and worked under Harley Earl at a salary of \$20,000 a year (the equivalent of roughly \$340,000 today). This seems to have been part of GM's design patent settlement, and the \$20,000 was probably more than Earl

himself made at the time. Hibbard came into Art & Colour as head of the Cadillac studio and, perhaps due to Earl's animosity and lack of cooperation (Hibbard never said), the arrangement at GM didn't work out. Hibbard opened his own consulting office, Hibbard Inc., in 1934 and did some designs for Studebaker and race-car engineer Harry Miller. He worked for Fiat in 1938 and designed armored cars in 1939, then returned to GM briefly in 1940 as an advisor and finally went to work for Ford in 1941. He stayed with Ford until 1948 and even served for a short time as head of Ford design when E.T. (Bob) Gregorie left.

Dutch Darrin found another backer in a wealthy French banker and industrialist named Fernandez, and together they formed another coachbuilding organization, Fernandez & Darrin. At its

height, F&D employed just as many workmen as H&D had, around 200. But by the mid 1930s, business was so slow that Fernandez and Darrin parted company and closed their shops. Darrin returned to the U.S. in 1937, settled in California and soon began producing his series of Packard-Darrin automobiles. The heyday of coachbuilders like Hibbard & Darrin had come to an end.

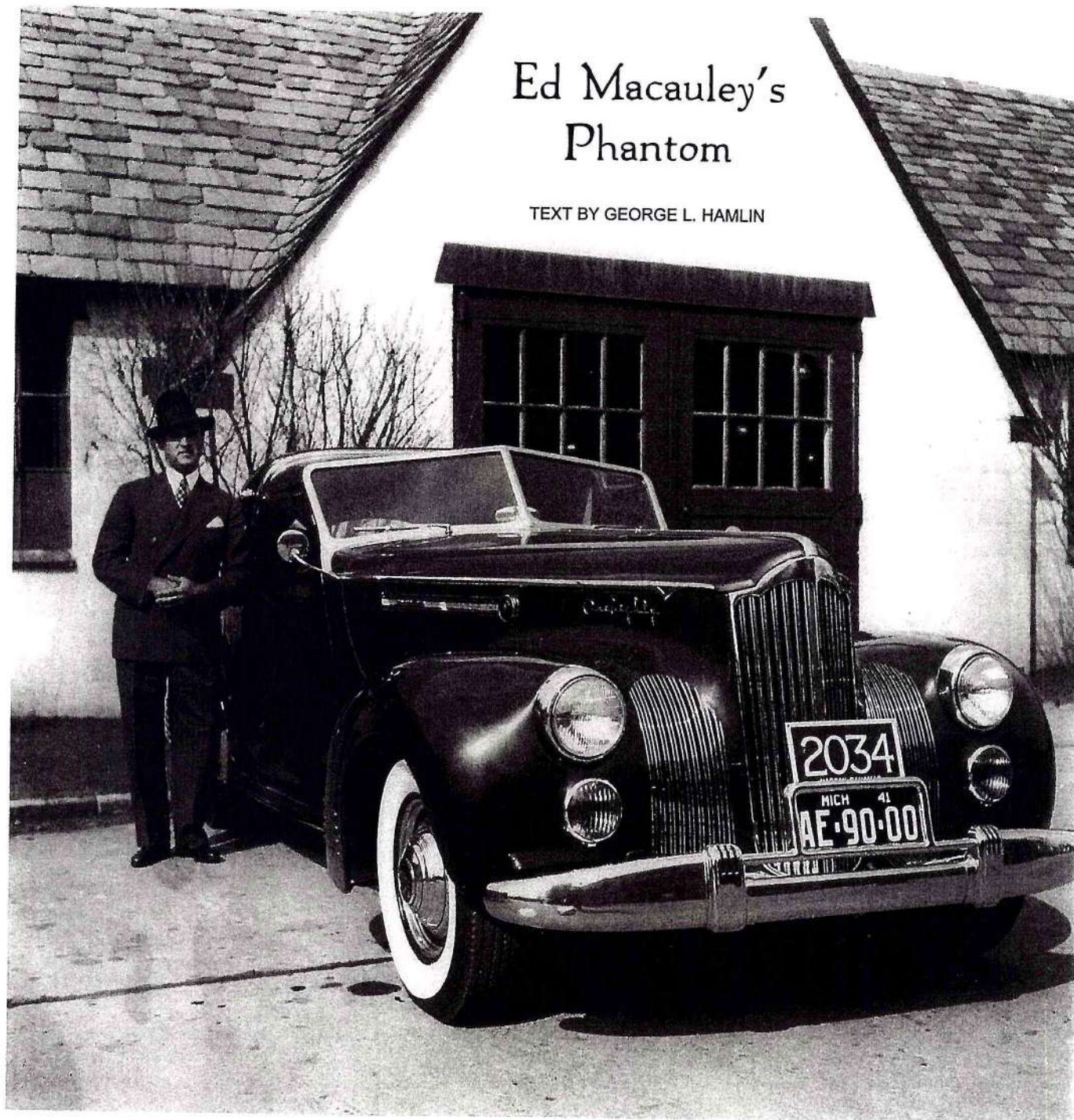
photo courtesy of Dave Hollis



Darrin applied his talents to all sorts of makes including this beautiful Rolls-Royce, top, and this European-looking '38 Ford.

Ed Macauley's Phantom

TEXT BY GEORGE L. HAMLIN



Conventional wisdom has it that, caught unprepared at the end of World War II by the untimely disposition of the prewar old-style or classic-style body dies, Packard had to make do with the Clipper body while hastily readying an all-new line of 1948 cars based on the only firm styling exercise available to them: the 1941 Phantom of Ed Macauley. Well, that's what you can read almost anywhere, and the only thing about that scenario is, it's a lot more complicated than that. While it is true that Packard had to

make do with the Clippers for a while, the shortcoming of this body was simply that it had never been tooled for specialty cars of any description, even convertibles, before the war. For one thing, the 1948 cars were done from the basic Clipper, not from scratch. The main work on the lines of the 1948 job was done by the Briggs Manufacturing Company, not by Macauley. And the Phantom followed the evolution of the 22nd Series more than it led. We will agree that some of the 22nd Series styling features were



Left and above left — Ed Macauley with his new Darrin coupe de ville. Note the “Air Conditioned” script on the hood louvers, and the lack of parking lights and hood ornament. We have no idea what the “2034” plate was for. Above right — The car in 1944.

tried first on Macauley's Phantom; but many ideas went the other way; being put on the Phantom after they were worked up for the production version.

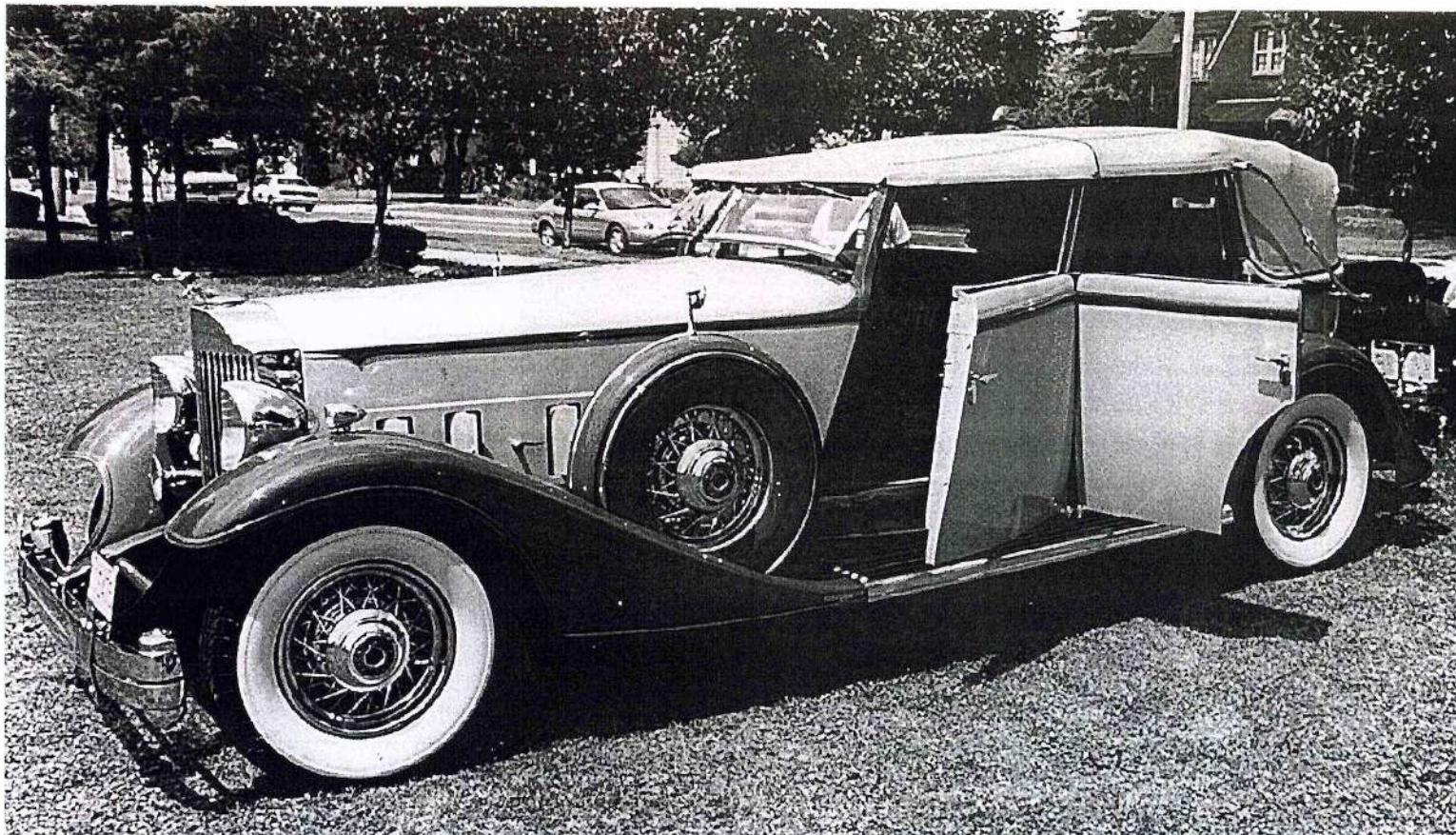
That something would have to be done to flesh out the Packard line was obvious, although there was internal dissension about some of the means. Henney had stepped up at about the right time to trim out a line of limousines based on the Clipper, and so these cars were back in the showrooms relatively early. But there were still no convertibles, nor were there commercial cars (given time, Henney could have made them; a couple of prototypes were on the streets of Freeport). Over the objections of some Packard stylists who felt that the move was unnecessary, George Christopher made the decision to “update” the Clipper. And Christopher WAS the President. Responsible for carrying out the job was Styling Director Ed Macauley.

“Ed Macauley,” said former Packard stylist John Reinhart in an interview for *Special Interest Autos* in 1973, “was a good friend, a very fine man and one of the last true gentleman in the industry.” Nearly everyone who met Macauley uses these identical terms to describe him. In addition, no one has ever accused Macauley of being an automobile stylist; he was there in large part because his father was Chairman of the Board. At the 1973 PAC National Meet in Detroit, Reinhart outlined the process by which the 22nd Series was created. “In 1946, Briggs (which was doing all of Packard's production bodies at the time) took

a standard Clipper and filled in the parts between the front and back fenders with clay. They were trying to save money, keeping as many parts from the Clipper as they could, but in the end the only parts that were the same were the deck lid and roof.” The work was done under the supervision of Al Prance, who was Briggs' chief designer; Briggs, more than just a body production house, maintained a styling capability as a customer goodwill gesture. This department had had a hand in the preliminary work on the Clipper design six years before, although the finished product had unmistakable DNA from the drawing board of Dutch Darrin. This time, however, Briggs and Prance carried the day, and their facelift was accepted as the 1948 Packard line. Where, then, do Macauley and his Phantom come in?

Macauley had been tinkering with streamlined styling for some time; he tooled around Detroit in a traffic-stopping custom-built car that, while officially known as Phantom, was better known on East Grand Boulevard as the Dog Car. It wasn't that anyone on the payroll thought of the vehicle as a loser, but rather that a “dog” was something that you could experiment with — try out new ideas on, whether the ideas dealt with styling or with mechanical

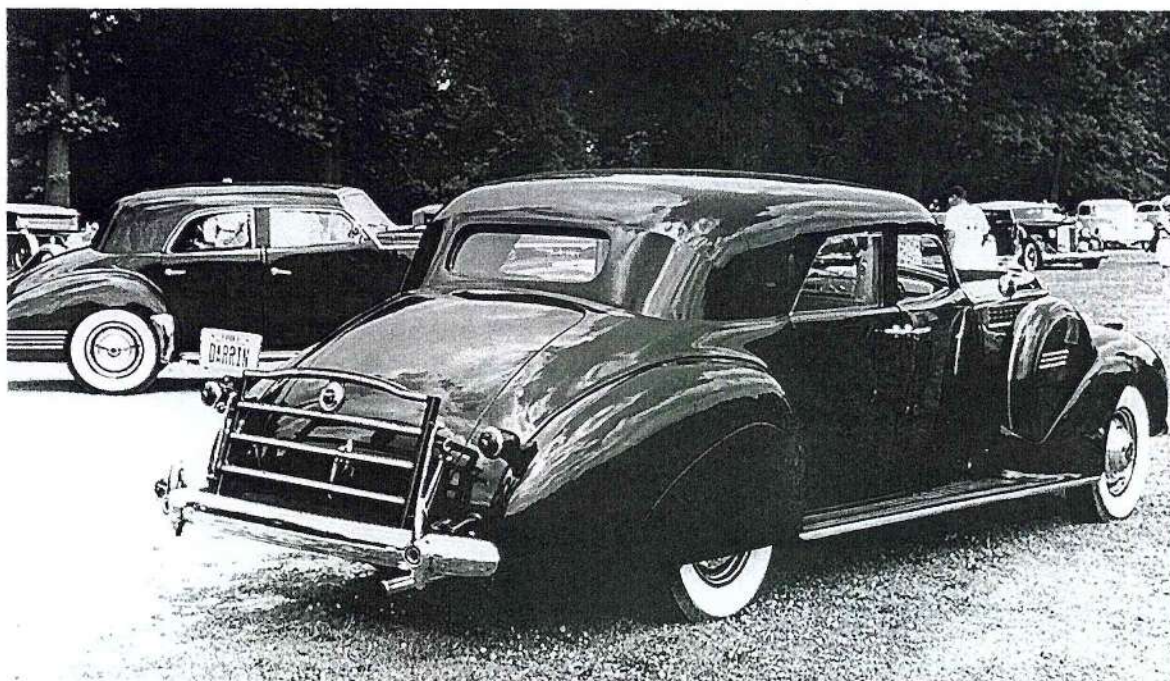
This article was originally published in the Fall 1975 issue of The Cormorant. It has been updated with additional information.



1933 Model 1006 Twelve Convertible Limousine, one of the first efforts of the new design firm, Fernandez & Darrin of Paris. This car now owned by Robert Briglia, Phillipsburg, NJ.

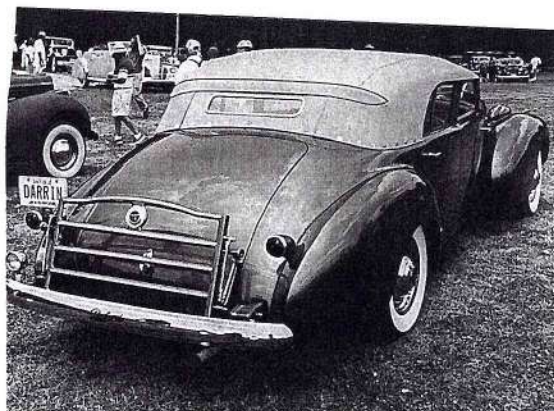
Field of Darrins

If you design it, they will show it
Text & Photos by Don Hull



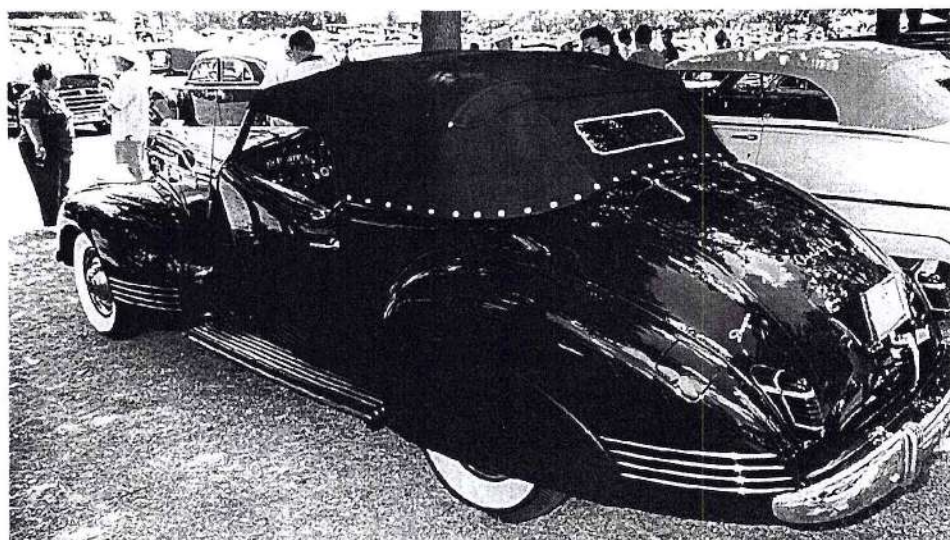
Rear: 1941 Model
1907 180 Sport
Sedan owned by
Charles Goes IV of
Chicago.

Near: 1940 Model
1807 180 Sport
Sedan Style B
owned by Gene
Tareshawty of
Youngstown, Ohio.

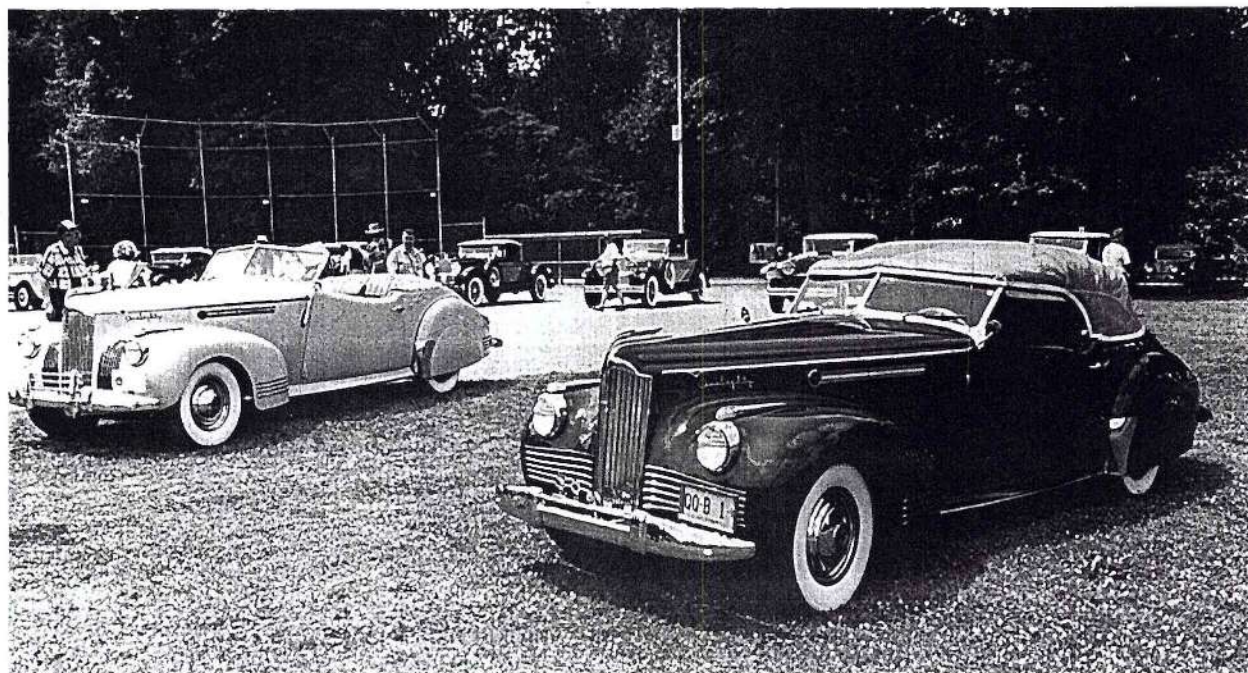


1940 Model 1807 180 Convertible Sedan owned by Bill Hirsch of Newark, NJ.

To paraphrase Dizzy Dean who said, "It ain't braggin' if ya really done it," we'll say, "It ain't vain to wear a Darrin vanity plate when ya really got one." The car above is Gene Tarashawty's 1940 180 Sport Sedan Style B, the car below is a 1941 180 Darrin Convertible Coupe in your basic black.



Howard "Dutch" Darrin, a pilot in WW I in France, met Thomas L. Hibbard and the two started their own design firm in Paris in 1923. The firm collapsed in 1929. Hibbard returned to the U.S., Darrin stayed in Paris, hooking up with wealthy furniture manufacturer, Fernandez. By 1937, Darrin was in Hollywood designing cars for the movie colony which caught the attention of Packard management. Darrin designed cars for Packard til WW II intervened, contracting for the manufacturing at Central Manufacturing Co., in Indiana, and later, at Hess & Eisenhardt in Cincinnati, Ohio with a handful of special orders made at his own shop in Hollywood.



l to r: 1941 Model 1906 180 Victoria owned by Bill Weltyk, Downers Grove, Illinois and a 1942 Model 2006 180 Victoria owned by Robert Turnquist, of Morristown, New Jersey.

the convertible victoria and he excelled at its execution, not only by creating an innovative compromise between sporting and formal coachwork but also by his mastery of the complicated 3-position top mechanism. In "Dutch" Darrin's idiom, a convertible victoria was an open body with seating for four in which the top usually completely disappeared when stowed, had an intermediate position which covered the rear seats but left the driver's compartment open in the manner of a formal town car. In 1937 "Darrin of Paris" executed a cut-down door disappearing top victoria on a Packard One Twenty chassis for actor Dick Powell which was quickly

followed by three 1938 Packard One Eighty victorias.

Promoted as the "Glamour Car of the Year!", the Darrin convertible victorias were the halo under which Packard out-sold Cadillac.

Packard Darrins combine a stylish presence and a sporting attitude with the quality and performance of the Packard chassis and engine. They have panache, much like "Dutch" Darrin himself, that other cars of the period strive to emulate but rarely, if ever, achieve. They will, like a few timeless designs from automobile styling history, stop traffic and strike up conversations in any situation.





THIS CAR

This is the last Packard Darrin Convertible Victoria built, the fifteenth of only fifteen examples constructed in the 1942 model year.

This Darrin was acquired new by Gene Autry, "America's favorite singing cowboy." Autry is well known for his starring roles in over 90 Silver Screen Westerns and his popular radio show, Melody Ranch. The Darrin was used by the popular star until 1951 when Autry traded it for a new Cadillac. This car was purchased from the Cadillac salesman by Cleveland Ohio Collector Mr. Bill Kranz later that year. Kranz owned the Darrin, other than transferring title for a few years



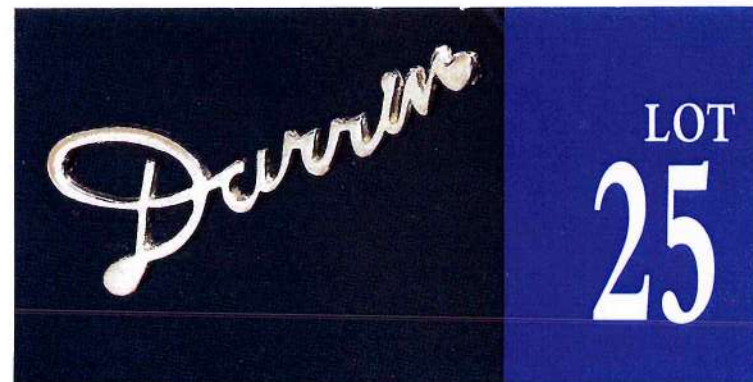
to a business associate who never took possession of it, until it was acquired by Bob Turnquist (a friend of Dutch Darrin and his half-brother David) of Hibernia Auto Restorations in about 1976 on behalf of Mr. Otis Chandler.

It was acquired from the Chandler collection by the present owner.

Restored by Hibernia, it has been carefully preserved and maintained, it is hand-somely liveried in medium blue with blue interior, brown carpets and blue top. Fitted with three-speed transmission with over-drive, radio and heater, the current owner reports that it is in very good shape throughout, always starts, drives wonderfully and is in mechanically sound condition.

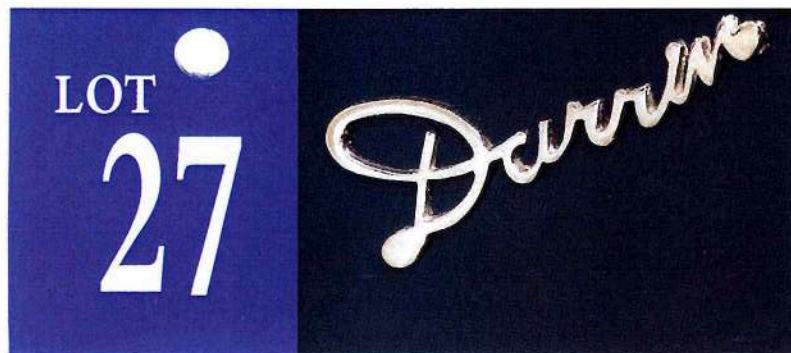
The Packard Darrin proved to be much more successful than either Packard or Dutch Darrin expected and demand quickly outstripped the production capabilities of Darrin's small Hollywood shop. Production was eventually subcontracted to Central Manufacturing Company in Connorsville, Indiana (part of the Ford empire) and later to Hess & Eisenhart company, one of the oldest, most experienced and highest quality coachbuilders in America, where the last six 1940 models and all the subsequent Packard Darrins were built. Hess & Eisenhart's specialty, professional cars, put a premium of reliability and strength and the final Packard Darrin Convertible Victorias built in Hess & Eisenhart's shop are the best-built of the entire series.

The last and the best constructed of the



Packard Darrins, first owned by universally recognized Gene Autry, as well as its history of caring ownership and preservation by only three subsequent motivated and discerning collectors makes this Darrin particularly desirable both to serious collectors and to those who want to take advantage of its excellent mechanical condition to participate in tours and events.

- THE LAST PACKARD DARRIN BUILT
- FIRST OWNED BY GENE AUTRY
- CONTINUOUS FOUR-OWNER HISTORY
- SOUND COSMETIC AND EXCELLENT MECHANICAL CONDITION



1942 PACKARD 180 SUPER EIGHT CONVERTIBLE VICTORIA

FORMERLY OWNED BY GENE AUTRY,
THE LAST PACKARD DARRIN BUILT

COACHWORK DESIGN BY
DARRIN

CONSTRUCTED BY
HESS & EISENHART

- CHASSIS NO. E502240
- ENGINE NO. 1529-2015
- 356 CID INLINE EIGHT CYLINDER ENGINE
- 165 BHP AT 4,200 RPM
- 3-SPEED MANUAL GEARBOX WITH OVERDRIVE
- INDEPENDENT FRONT SUSPENSION WITH COIL SPRINGS
- LIVE REAR AXLE WITH LEAF SPRINGS
- 127" WHEELBASE

ESTIMATE:
\$275,000-\$350,000

PACKARD: A BRIEF HISTORY

The first Packard was constructed in 1899 in the shops of John Ward and William Doud Packard's Ohio Company. Distinguished by careful attention to detail, quality construction and materials, Packard pioneered automatic timing advance and the H-pattern gearshift. It may also claim first use of one of the automobile's most enduring attributes, the slogan, "Ask the Man Who Owns One."

Under the leadership of Alvan Macauley and Jesse Vincent, Packard became a leader in the luxury field, a fiercely competitive arena which was quickly winnowed by its wealthy, conservative and highly selective clients to a very few competitors.

THE PACKARD DARRIN

During the thirties Packard made many changes to its product line but through all these evolutions the Super Eight remained the paradigm for quality, reliability and style.

Even the conservative Alvan Macauley, who may have been the prototype for Packard customers, could see that Packard needed a fresh face in the late thirties. Southern California Packard dealer Earle C. Anthony brought Howard "Dutch" Darrin's convertible victoria custom bodies to Macauley's attention. Quickly recognized as the spark Packard needed, Darrin's 2 and 4-door convertible victorias were cataloged by Packard in 1940 and are the most desirable of all

Packards of this period.

Howard "Dutch" Darrin was born to money and comfort and blessed with an eye and a sense for style, design and balance. He created a forty year career in America and Europe designing some of the most important, successful, elegant, and creative coachwork of the Classic Era.

"Dutch" Darrin was the ideal representative for LeBaron to send to Paris to represent them in 1922, where his naturally ebullient personality blended smoothly with the "Jazz Age". But barely a year later he joined with LeBaron colleague Tom Hibbard to form Hibbard & Darrin. Over the next decade and a half they, and Darrin's later partner, a banker named Fernandez, created groundbreaking designs, skillfully executed in their own shop, on the most luxurious chassis. So innovative was their work that in 1927 General Motors licensed a Hibbard & Darrin hood and fender treatment for Cadillac, paying the then considerable sum of \$25,000 plus \$1,000/month for the privilege.

"Dutch" Darrin returned to the US in 1937 where he set up his own coachworks in Hollywood on Sunset Boulevard. The name he chose, "Darrin of Paris", was as flamboyant as his coachwork designs. His name, reputation – and no doubt his bon vivant personality – brought the operation success.

"Dutch" Darrin's favorite body style was

Gooding & Co 8/15/04
Pebble Beach, Ca.

think that it was neighborhood kids who began to point at the old car and laugh, but I think it was a modern '58, with good air and a fine automatic, that wooed Grandmother from her favorite. When they down-sized homes, my grandparents moved the Darrin to another home in Beverly Hills, Chicago, but it was still garaged.

In Beverly Hills it mainly sat until 1966 when I, at 17, wanted to drive it to high school. My grandfather never thought Dad and I were serious, but Dad was a good mechanic and after about six weeks of work it ran well—even the windows worked after I took the mess apart (what a lesson in cleaning and assembly). Alas, Grandfather



Prewar Salon: 1941 Darrin Sport Sedan

Grandmother's Car Always Got the Garage

TEXT BY CHARLES B. GOES IV
PHOTOGRAPHY BY BUD JUNEAU

DECEMBER 7TH, 1941: A date that would live in infamy. On December 8th we declared war on Japan, and on December 11th Germany declared war on us. On December 18th chromium stockpiles were requisitioned by the government and automotive plating was discontinued.

Our local Packard dealer knew my grandparents well, and for many years they had bought what today would be considered "executive driven" cars usually less than one year old. On December 19th, the dealer telephoned my grandmother: "We have a car on a railroad car in Chicago and shipment to California has been stopped by Government Order as non-essential." A Japanese invasion or attack on California was expected and non-essential freight was to be removed so rail could send troops and supplies to California. Although not commonly known in the Chicago area, there was a great fear on the West Coast that Japan would invade California. My grandfather's sister lived in San Diego, so he knew that she and her neighbors were very afraid of an invasion. So when the Packard dealer said that they feared that factory-owned cars might be confiscated if sent to California, it made sense to him.

My grandparents bought the car, a 1941 Darrin sport sedan, not realizing or being very much interested

cubic-inch, 160-horsepower engine, Electromatic clutch, power windows and factory air conditioning. Only in later years, when I began to research the car, did we realize that Dutch Darrin had prepared this one prototype Darrin Sport Sedan for Packard's consideration in 1941, but it had been turned down for production in favor of the LeBaron Sport Brougham (see accompanying letter).

The Darrin often traveled from Chicago to Smith and Amherst Colleges between 1941 and 1944, where my uncle and aunt attended college in Massachusetts. They shipped luggage ahead and drove through Canada because gas was plentiful. After the war other Packards were bought, driven and sold, but the Darrin always stayed inside the garage, used only on nice days. Their last Packard was a 1953 with the Ultramatic transmission and it was such a problem that after three attempts to get it fixed, they switched to a 1955 Cadillac.

During the next few years a number of Cadillacs were bought and sold, but the '41 Packard was still kept and used occasionally. By 1958 though, the Packard wasn't being taken out any more and it sat unused through 1961. I missed the rides to the stores in South Shore and a chance to run the electric windows and ride the running board up the driveway. Some

CUSTOMER INVOICE
PACKARD MOTOR CAR COMPANY OF CHICAGO

Date December 20th, 1941 Invoice No. CP

Chas. B. Goes, Jr.
8754 S. Woodlawn Ave.,
Chicago, Illinois

Model	Year	Price	Amount
ONE 1941 PACKARD DARRIN SPT. SEDAN (QUOTED)	1941-1941	\$2410.00	
Color <i>Maroon</i>			
Time price Differential			
Special Equipment			
Additional Equipment			
<i>Air Conditioner</i>			
<i>Electric Windows</i>			
<i>Ultramatic</i>			
100000 OCCUPATIONAL EXPENSE			49.00
<i>Over time</i>			
<i>Model 1941-180</i>			
<i>H.P. 32.4</i>			
Total			\$2459.00

PAID BY
DEC 22 1941
CHAS. B. GOES, JR.
8754 S. WOODLAWN AVE.
CHICAGO, ILL.

PACKARD MOTOR CAR COMPANY OF CHICAGO

Date of Invoice December 20th, 1941

Model Number 100119 Serial Number 1428-001

Delivery Date as ordered December 20th, 1941

Chas. B. Goes, Jr.
8754 S. Woodlawn Ave.
Chicago, Illinois

Model	Year	Price	Amount
ONE 1941 PACKARD DARRIN SPT. SEDAN (QUOTED)	1941-1941	\$2410.00	
Color <i>Maroon</i>			
Time price Differential			
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Additional Equipment			
<i>Air Conditioner</i>			
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<i>Over time</i>			
<i>Model 1941-180</i>			
<i>H.P. 32.4</i>			
Total			\$2459.00

PAID BY
DEC 22 1941
CHAS. B. GOES, JR.
8754 S. WOODLAWN AVE.
CHICAGO, ILL.

in the fact that it was a one-of-a-kind car. It was of little interest that it had been driven by the President of the Packard Motor Car Company, Max Gilman. Like most Americans who managed to get a new car just before the War started, they were glad to have it and used it all through the war, and up until 1958. It was always my grandmother's favorite car. Built on the One Eighty chassis, it had the 356-

ill, and I had no desire to drive it without him. But Gene Tareshawty and Charles Blackman encouraged me and Paul Terhorst gave me some advice on sources of repairs in the Chicago area. He had seen the car once in 1973, when my grandparents and I met a Packards of

Chicagoland tour at the Shore Club at Lake Geneva. Dudley Morrison was at Warren with his '41 One Sixty sedan, and he and Paul made me welcome at the Opus, where we had a nice reunion.

The shop I decided to use was Fran Roxas's firm in Alsip, Illinois,

where as much work as time allowed was done—mechanically, electrically and cosmetically—from October 1998 to May 1999. The engine now had over 250,000 miles on it, so I decided to go through it and sent it to Rich Engquist of McPherson, Kansas, prior to dropping the rest of the car off at Fran's. This worked very well, as there was plenty of work to go around. My wife saw how nice the other cars in Fran's shop looked and suggested that we restore our chrome. *Was she right!* It looks great! With two boys in College, new paint will have to wait, but the Darrin was presentable enough. With the car running well and looking better than it had for years, it was off to Warren, Ohio for the Packard Centennial and Magnum Opus.

This article is dedicated to my grandmother, who had the vision and ability to share her stories of the travels and times of the Packard with a youngster who would one day end up being a great car's custodian for the next generation of our family. Through all of its trials and tribulations, the Darrin was a much loved and remembered member of our family (and neighborhood) and well known to a number of shops who kept it going. Don and Smitty at Boyd's Sinclair loved to talk cars, and as teenagers we thought it was a great place to hang out. Don had a Model T Ford, and his enthusiasm and encouragement kindled an interest in antique cars in this 14-year-old that has lasted to this day. The Packard now resides in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, and, after a flawless trip to Warren, goes out for a drive with the family on every nice weekend.



said, "Thanks, but it's too good to drive to school," so I drove it with Grandmother a few times and parked it until 1973, when they moved to Lake Geneva, Wisconsin.

Again Dad and I got it going, but again we both still were "too young" to drive it up there! I followed my grandfather and Dad as we attempted to move the car, but the gas tank was bad and we had to stop several times to clean the filter. During the drive I pushed it through three toll booths with a 1966 Caddy because when the motor idled down while paying the toll, it would stall with a clogged gas filter. We finally made it, at times barely going 25 mph. The saga of the Packard wasn't over yet. After a heavy snowfall in 1975, the roof of the garage collapsed on it, and the damaged car was moved to a nearby chicken coop where it sat covered with a tarp—thank goodness.

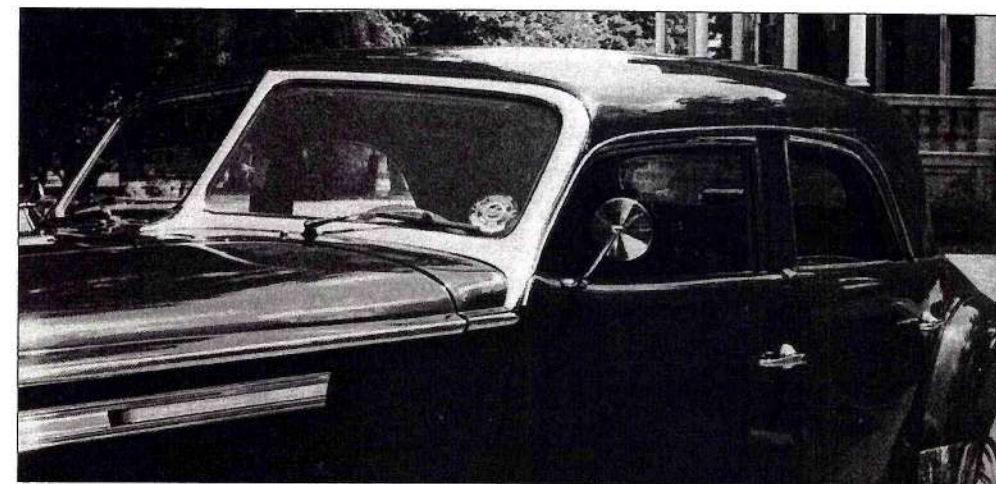
In 1978, we finally got Grandmother to get the car out of the chicken coop and have it repaired. When I saw it in 1979 it looked pretty good, having spent time at a local body shop. By this time the engine was tired, with over 200,000 miles on it and it started badly because of damp conditions during storage, the dirty gas tank, and plain old age. Granddad again parked it, and he passed on in 1983. The car continued to sit, and by 1986 my Dad and I got to work. We wanted to be able to raise the windows, and some bad body work had shown up, so we started a long, spare time project. By this time, my Dad was semi-retired and he enjoyed having the project.

In 1988 My grandmother, now

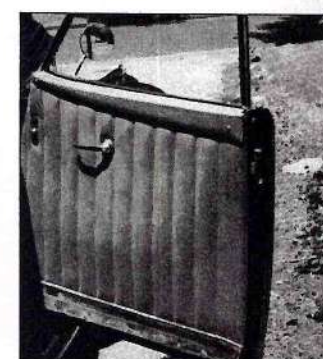
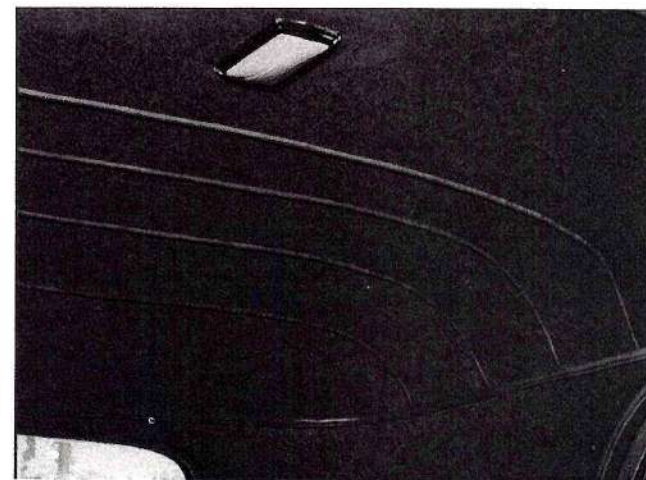
93, got her first good ride in years and gave me the car for my birthday. I was delighted and so was Dad. She knew I had always liked the car, as I often spoke of the good times we had in the South Shore days. In September 1998 Charles Blackman called and

asked me to bring the car to the Magnum Opus in Warren, Ohio in July 1999. I agreed since he and Dad and my grandparents had been friends and had talked Packard over the years.

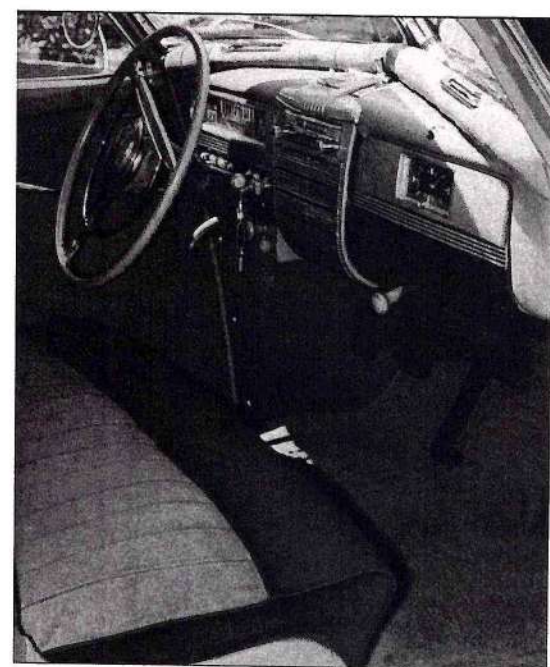
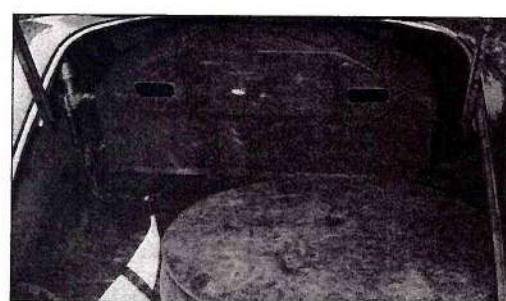
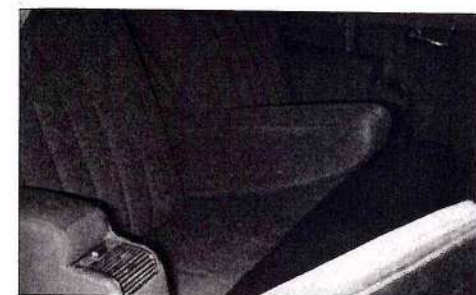
The car had not been driven since 1994, since Dad had become



The Goeses' original, unrestored Darrin is truly unique. Note the very low-cut side windows compared with heavy cast windshield frame, hydro-electric power window switch, typical Darrin padded dash and reveal moldings, Darrin upholstery in beautiful unaltered condition, and the Darrin-designed headliner. Odometer shows 37,854, but add 200,000 more...



Cast bronze windshield frame seems a bit too tall for cut-down side windows. The Servel air conditioning compressor is under the hood, with main unit in the trunk along with covered spare wheel. Packard dual back-up lights adorn the elegant rear.





Howard A. (Dutch) Darrin restyled the 1955 Willys Aero Eagle by building up and stretching the fenders and hood but left basic body alone. Constellation ("kiss mouth") grille and front smack of Kaiser-Darrin roadster, which Darrin also styled. Prototype shown would have become 1957-58 Willys.

Darrin's Willys

HERE'S THE CAR the Willys 77 might have been if the Willys nameplate had survived in this country. Shown is a styling prototype designed by Dutch Darrin, who was under contract to Kaiser-Willys during the early-to-mid 1950s.

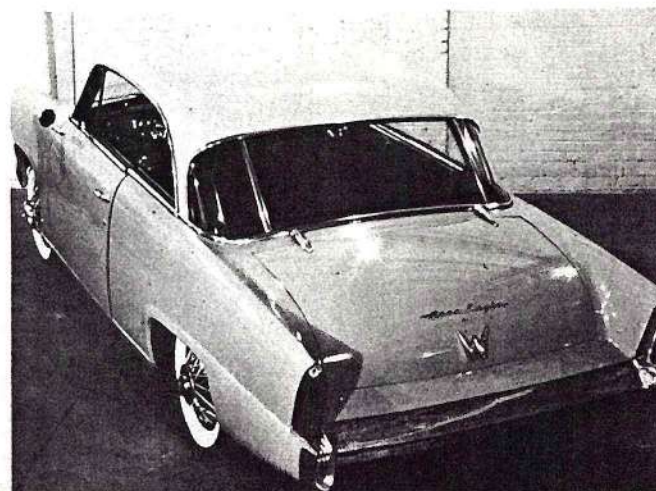
This design was approved by Edgar Kaiser to become the 1957-58 Willys Aero Eagle. Kaiser took over Willys in 1953 and continued to build the Aero series in the U.S. until 1956. After dropping the car in this country, they moved production to Brazil.

The Aero began life in 1952 as a very clean, good looking little car, but by 1955 it had become cluttered by too many conflicting facelifts. Darrin was commissioned to put things right again by starting fresh. Looking back, he says, "Although I have constructed many a car from the ground up, I feel the greatest challenge is the so-called *facelift*. Actually, it means transforming an automobile by the least expensive means—making the customer feel he's getting a brand-new model. In the case of the Willys, I extended the fenders and restyled the tip of the hood, using the same 'constellation' grille theme as on the Kaiser-Darrin roadster. The essential body shell remained untouched. And like the Darrin, this proposed car was developed on an extremely tight budget."

When it became apparent to Kaiser-Willys that manufacture of the Aero series would stop after 1956, the company gave thought to using Darrin's styling on Aero sedans built in Brazil. Still, the expense of bringing out an entirely restyled Brazilian Aero proved too high, so all plans to produce this design were dropped. Too bad, because it's a handsome car. □



Side and ¾ rear views show strong Stude Starliner influence. Darrin resisted temptation to add kicked-up fins or load car down with chrome.



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Plastic Automobile Has Six Cylinders

Plastic bodies of spun glass are planned for the new Darrin car, which is slated for production early in 1947. The car is powered by a six-cylinder Continental motor which will attain speeds up to 110 miles an hour. Both front fenders and hood of the Darrin are stamped from one piece of plastic. A touch of a dashboard button lifts them to expose the engine and wheels.

Rocket-Powered Hydro-Bomb

Rocket-powered aerial torpedoes that race through water at 40 knots and carry 600 pounds of high explosive were developed by Westinghouse shortly before V-J day. The hydro-bomb can be dropped 600 feet from a plane traveling 300 miles per hour, giving pilots a better chance to stay out of range of antiaircraft fire. Weighing 2300 pounds, the projectile has for an engine a large pipe packed with solid fuel which, when burning, creates expanding gases.



Jeep Is Converted To Station Wagon

Already in use as a military and farm vehicle, the versatile Willys jeep has been converted into a station wagon with an all-steel body. It will seat seven persons. The metal panels of the body simulate maple and mahogany. The seats have waterproof coverings and are removable so that the interior can accommodate bulky packages. The familiar lines of the jeep hood are retained in the new model. It comes in three colors.

DUTCH DARRIN'S CROSELY

Stillborn Project for an American Sports Car

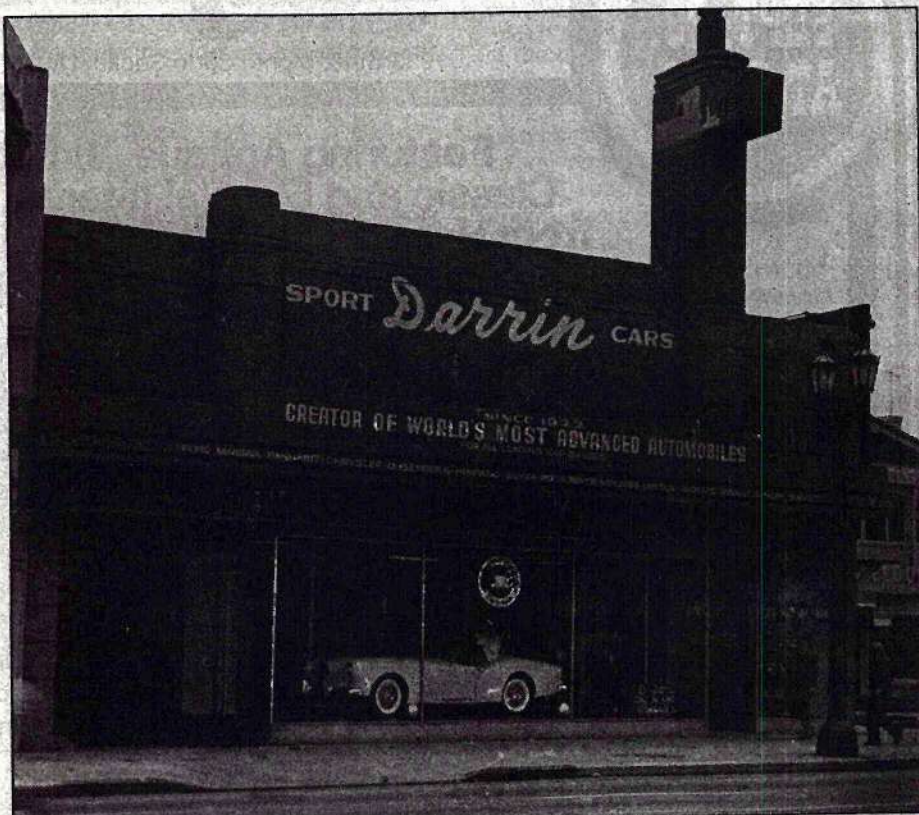
by Richard M. Langworth

Raymond Loewy once wrote a book entitled "Never Leave Well Enough Alone," and that brilliantly descriptive phrase would probably apply equally as well to Howard A. "Dutch" Darrin. At over 80, Dutch is still designing automobiles. For the last 30 years, he's been one of the most active and imaginative freelance stylists in the world.

Dutch began improving the looks of standard production cars right after the war, when he reactivated his prewar showroom on Sunset Boulevard in Los Angeles. His first efforts were directed toward Cadillacs and Lincoln Continentals, which he cleaned up considerably and bestowed with his by-then-famous "Darrin dip" at the beltline, just ahead of the rear fenders. In due course, though, he began touring the large manufacturers with various ideas for neat, clean sporty cars based on production components. In this, as we now know, Dutch was far ahead of his time: the Europeans were building production-based sports cars already, but the Americans didn't start until the Fifties, and one of the earliest domestic examples of the practice was Dutch's own Kaiser-Darrin.

One of Darrin's lesser-known projects that certainly should have had a better chance was this snappy sports car for the Crosley chassis, evolved during 1947. "Crosley wanted a new design," he says, "and my idea was to clothe the present chassis in a brand new body made of fiberglass." (Darrin was one of the earliest proponents of glass-reinforced plastic.) "The car was to have been built for Crosley by the Hayes body company, and in concept it involved only seven individual body panels, the main one being the hood and front fender assembly. The minimal body panels were among several new ideas I had patented, but one item I failed to register was the rear license plate—this was hinged to cover the gasoline cap, and flipped backward during fill-ups.

"Some time later, Ford, who had



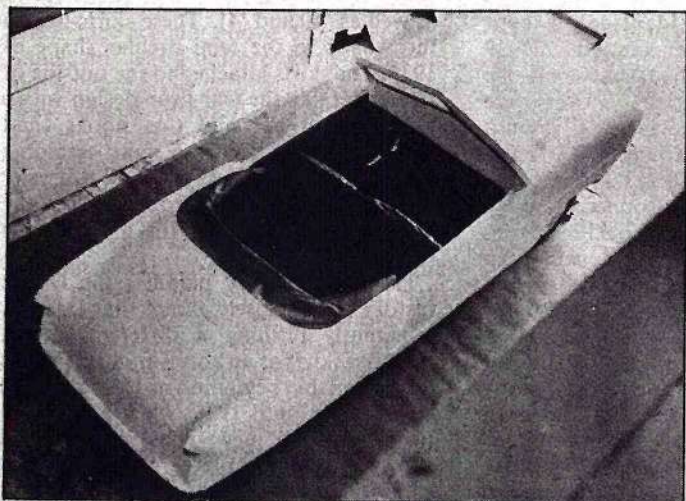
The Darrin showroom on Santa Monica Boulevard, circa 1954, with, unfortunately, Duesenberg misspelled.

adopted this idea on its 1952 cars, called me. They said they were being sued by someone who claimed to have invented the device. *Automotive Industries* had published my plate-gas cap cover years before, and Ford wanted to know if I would testify as to having originated the design. At the time I didn't realize I had any rights in the matter, and when I mentioned travel expenses to Ford, I never heard further. I assume the *Automotive Industries* article had sufficiently established me as the inventor, and not the claimant who was suing them."

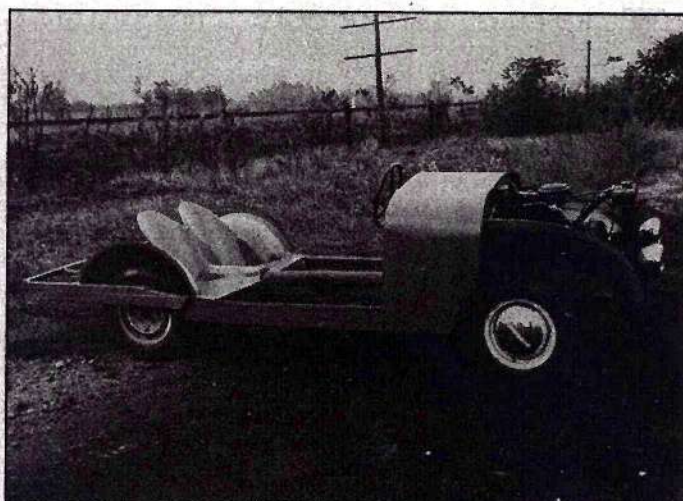
What happened to the Darrin-Crosley? It was stillborn for a reason that seemed to plague Dutch's designs for manufacturers. "Crosley was never able to budget

it," he recalls, "a shame because it was a simple concept, one they could have reproduced at minimal cost and sold, I think, with some success."

Crosley, of course, continued to think about building sports cars, and a few years later came up with the Hot Shot, aka Super Sports—a nimble and quick little beast that pound-for-pound was one of the hottest sports cars ever built in this country or elsewhere. Unfortunately, though, it used a body that was altogether too reminiscent of the standard Crosley, and its looks were deplorable. So it is too bad that the SS couldn't have benefitted from the Darrin touch, as did so many other cars before and after the second World War.



Unique fiberglass body was composed of only seven panels, draped over basic Crosley chassis with 2 + 2 seating.



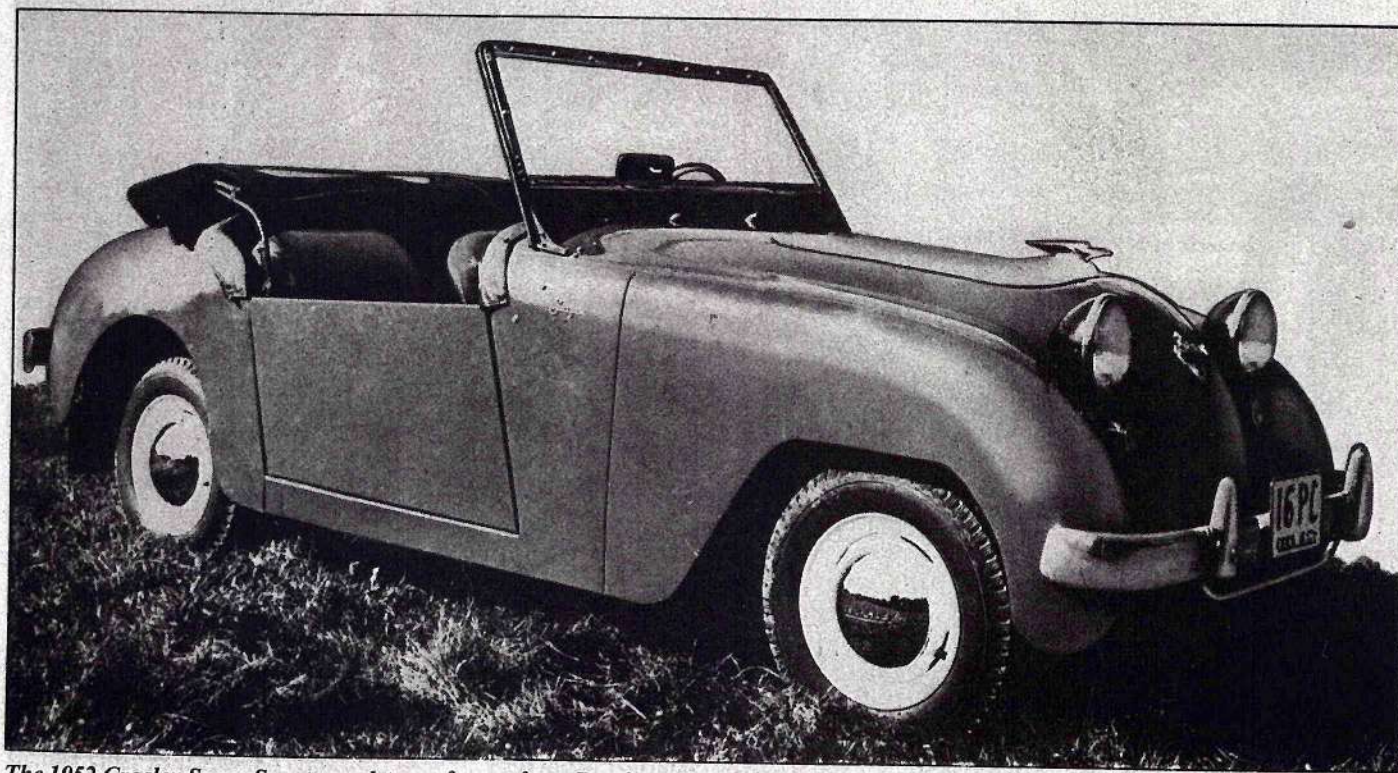
Unhung Crosley. Darrin sheared off bulbous body but used strong cowlings understructure, reminiscent of Packard-Darrins.



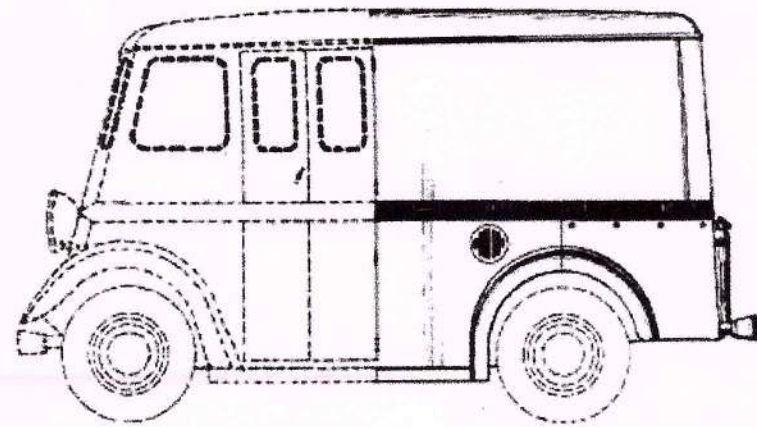
Immediately identifying car as a Darrin project were dipped belt-line, prominent leading edge of rear fender.



Later the Crosley was evaluated by Kaiser-Frazer. Darrin is in passenger's seat, with his associate Duncan McRae behind wheel.

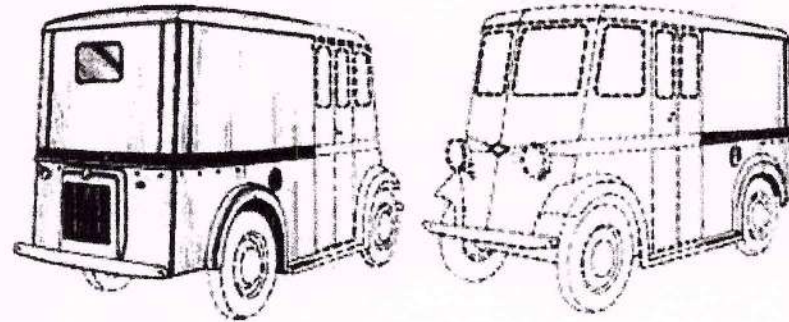


The 1952 Crosley Super Sports roadster, a far cry from Darrin styling, though by '52 Crosley had added hinged doors. . . .

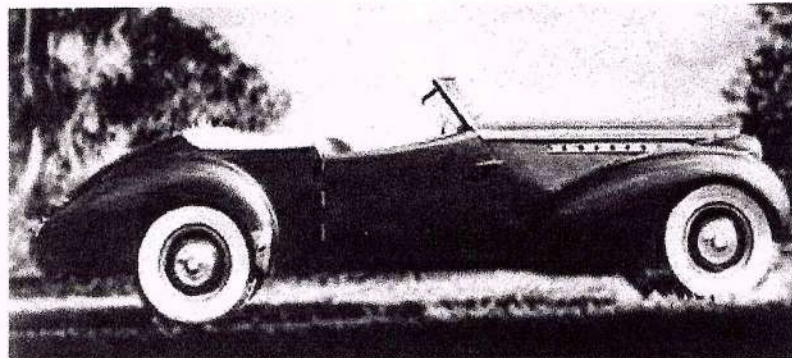


inquiries to the Victor Emanuel Co. as to the availability of the Cord 810/812 body dies. On February 8, 1939, Hupmobile took out a \$900,000 mortgage with the Lafayette County branch of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation (a federal government agency that loaned money to struggling firms during the Depression) and took possession of the 810/812's body dies and sheet-metal stampings.

DeVaux hired John Tjaarda to re-style the front end of Cord so the body could be fitted on a Hupmobile Senior Six chassis. The repackaged Cord 810/812 emerged as the new Hupmobile Skylark, and four prototypes were built for display at the upcoming fall 1939 automobile shows. The program was approved by Hupp's board of directors the Cord dies were brought to Hayes' Grand Rapids plant where they stamped out a trial run of thirty Skylark sedans. The cars were assembled at Hupmobile's Detroit factory as was a single Skylark Corsair Convertible.



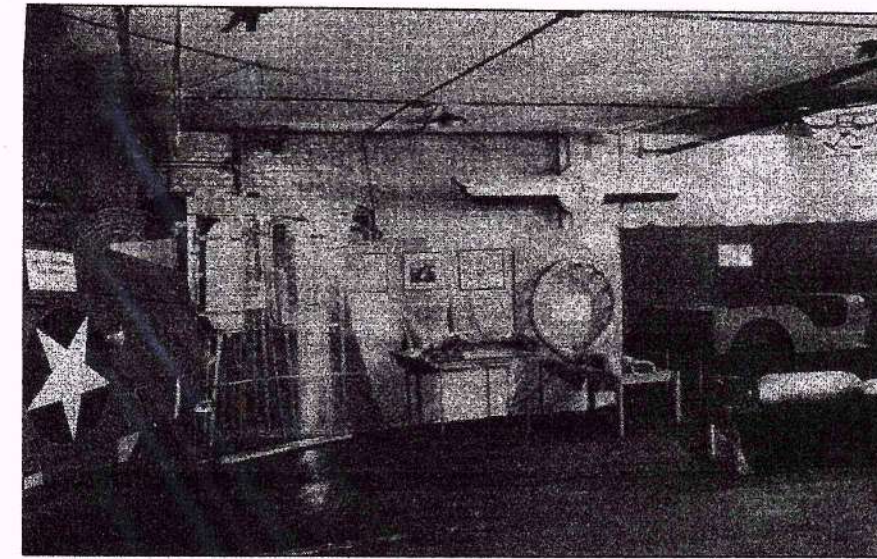
Due to their precarious financial situation, Hupmobile was unable to build any more Skylarks, however DeVaux made a deal with Graham-Paige offering them the dies providing they built them some Skylarks in return. Graham-Paige went for the deal, and in 1940 built 350 Skylark sedans for Hupmobile and 1450 Graham Hollywoods for themselves. Once again, the sheet-metal was produced at Hayes' Grand Rapids plant using the original Cord stampings which by the end of the run were no longer usable. Unfortunately, neither firm made any money out of their short-term partnership and were both out of the automobile business within the year.



In addition to Package Car production, Central Manufacturing was busy producing a short run of bodies for Howard Darrin. He had recently been awarded a contract to supply Packard with roadster bodies for the new Packard-Darrin Model 1906 convertible. A handful of cars had been built at Darrin's 'Darrin of Paris' shop in Hollywood, California, but he needed a much larger facility to produce the numbers needed by Packard. Darrin's wooden body dies were shipped to Connersville and production commenced on the Packard-Darrin in early 1939. When Central was awarded the Jeep body contract in May of 1941, production of the Packard-Darrin moved to Hess & Eisenhardt in Cincinnati, Ohio. Only a handful of Packard-Darrins were built in Cincinnati before the war prematurely ended the project.



During 1939 Auburn's attorneys and directors worked fervently to come up with a feasible reorganization plan and on April 20, 1940 Federal Judge Thomas D. Slick approved the plan which was supported by a 57% of Auburn's 3,500 stockholders. The plan called for Auburn and Central Manufacturing to merge their assets, and the resulting firm, the Auburn Central Manufacturing Corporation was organized on May 14, 1940. Shareholders would receive one share



After the war was over, American-Central set up this exhibit to show off its wartime accomplishments.

Judge Slick approved Auburn's reorganization plans in 1940. The Central Manufacturing Division of the Auburn Automobile Company was separately incorporated and renamed Auburn-Central. In that year too Howard "Dutch" Darrin leased part of Central space to assemble his Packard Darrin beauties. According to Henry Blommel, they were assembled on the same line as Cords had come down until three years earlier.

In early 1941, Willys-Overland of Toledo, Ohio, won a military contract to produce a small 4 x 4 utility truck for the army. The vehicle's popular name of jeep had not yet

been bestowed on it. Willys-accepted bids for the construction of a lot of 1,600 jeep bodies. Auburn-Central bid and won.

By this time the former Cord Corporation had taken on the name of one of its subsidiaries, the Aviation Corporation. Avco was well positioned to be a major player in military contracts for the duration of World War II. The corporation's divisions built ships, planes and vehicles, all of which were badly needed for the war effort. Henry Blommel is convinced that E.L. Cord's influence continued to send big contracts to Connersville.

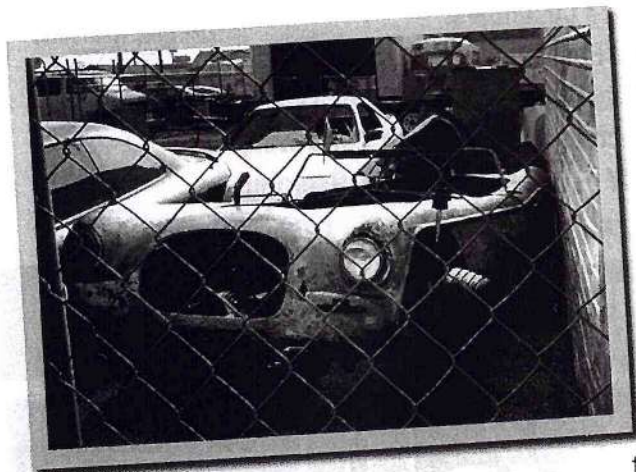
Central received a contract to build wings for the B-24 Liberator bomber. (The B-24 was a product of Consolidated-Vultee, another former holding of the Cord Corporation.) Bomber engine parts were made here too, as were fuselage sections for several different warplanes.

The biggest contract of all started with the Willys order in 1941. Over the next four years Auburn-Central would produce 445,000 jeep bodies, which would be shipped to Willys and Ford for installation on their chassis. 200,000 jeep trailer bodies would come down Auburn Central's assembly lines too, to be completed by Bantam and five other companies.

What was good for business was not good for historians. Burgeoning contract work created space shortages at Auburn-Central. In March 1941 accounting ledgers and other records of the Auburn Automobile Company that had been moved to Connersville in 1937 were carried to the town dump, there to be incinerated.

In 1942, in a burst of patriotism, Auburn-Central became American-Central. The company's war efforts were rewarded with two Army-Navy "E" pennants.

After the war, American-Central continued to supply civilian jeep bodies to Willys. Kitchen cabinets were back in production too. And "Slim" Davidson had been busy with the design of a practical consumer dishwasher. Dishwashers started down the line in 1948. American-Central underwent a name change again, this time to American Kitchens Division of Avco. Dishwashers and kitchen cabinets and appliances poured from the old Auburn Automobile Company facilities, eventually making it one of the largest



Fenced-in fiberglass

LIKE US, Dr. Dan Morton of Amarillo, Texas, can't resist peering through cyclone fencing when cars

are on the other side of it. Also like us, he can't resist snapping a picture when particularly interesting

and unusual cars are on the other side of that fence.

Dan noted that the body appeared to be made of fiberglass, an assertion that we and our friends familiar with fiberglass cars concur with. But exactly what it is has stumped us all. What we can see of the chassis suggests it was taken from a full-frame, front-engine American sedan with independent front suspension, though that frame doesn't appear to have held up well over the decades.

Does it look familiar to anybody out in Hemmings Nation?

Electric Omnibus

TWO BUCKS! That's all it took for Gary Harmon of Edwardsville, Illinois, to buy this photograph at a local antique mall. The bargain-basement price probably resulted from the utter lack of information to go with the photo.

"It looks like it may be an electric car judging by the huge box under the frame," Gary wrote. "The ladies' hats probably date this to about 1910—pre-World War I, for sure. I tried to google the info that is readable on the sign just above the running board, but no luck."

That information, by the way, shows that this vehicle belonged to the Hotel Bartholdi in New York City. We've shown other photographs of these electric sightseeing vehicles on the Hemmings Blog, but we've never seen one quite like this. Also, Gothamists, can you peg the location?



RE: Mystery in Clay

WHAT WE THOUGHT would be a long shot turned out quite a bit shorter. The photographs that Tom Quirk sent in for *HCC* #70, depicting an unidentified four-door sedan in clay, elicited several responses. First, regarding the nature of clay models, Robert Thacker, a former clay modeler himself, corrected us: Full-size clay modeling is not reserved for approved or near-approved models. Rather, full-size modeling is done for many vehicles, approved or not.

As for the shop and the models, both Chris Laurence of Seattle and James Clevenger of Advance, North Carolina, identified Howard "Dutch" Darrin's 1959 proposal for Illian, an Israel-based company that sold Kaisers and Studebakers and wanted to build a Lincoln Continental competitor. Dies were even made up, but war in the Middle East shut the project down.



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

THE MAKING OF A MASTERPIECE

"Where were you born?" I asked, pen and paper poised and ready for the answer. Rudy Stoessel and I were sitting in his office at Coachcraft in Hollywood. There were two desks in the small room, both covered with magazines and papers and pieces of body trim from cars in the process of being restored. Mister Stoessel sat in the chair like a man who didn't want to sit. He gave me the impression that he wanted to get back to the Rolls-Royce he had been working on when I arrived.

"In Germany?" I plied him again.

"Nuremberg," he said and reached with his left hand for a box of Tiparillos. I counted seven boxes stacked on top of each other on the desk. Maybe he has just laid in his annual supply, I reflected.

"When were you born and did you grow up in town or in the countryside?" I continued.

"I was born in 1907 in a small town outside Nuremberg. You couldn't even pronounce the name if I told you. What does this have to do with the Darrin Packards, anyway?" he wondered with a sharp look at me. I was beginning to feel a little insecure. He lighted his cigar.

"Oh, I was just curious," I said and tried my luck with still another question. "What's the name of the place?"

"Do you want me to spell it for you?" he asked with irritation as he leaned forward to search the desk for a piece of paper that he felt could be wasted on such an unworthy purpose. He pulled a carpenter's pen from behind his right ear and wrote with large

letters. I thought I had caught a glimpse of humor in his eyes. He gave me the paper.

"Herzongenaaurach," I read, pronouncing the name of the town in my most casual German.

"You speak German?" he asked, and gave me a skeptical glance.

"Yes, I do. I learned it in school in Sweden, and then I lived in Frankfurt for about half a year when I was twenty," I informed him. I continued to take notes. He nodded and combined a faint smile with a puff on the cigar.

"Tell me about Germany in those days, and what you did, and why you went to America," I asked him, hoping to find an angle of questioning that would make him talk. Not that I wanted to give him the third degree, but I was curious about his background. He was one of those old-world craftsmen, and he had been a very important figure in creating the Packard Darrin.

"I started my apprenticeship as a cabinet maker when I was sixteen. After I finished, I went looking for a job, but there was nothing. Germany had been suffering from terrible inflation, and millions of people went without work. Our family had it pretty good though. We lived in the countryside and grew our own produce, and my parents had a little grocery store. But there was no work for me. One day I asked my old man if I could go to Russia. I had heard that they needed mechanics and carpenters and all kinds of craftsmen. He wouldn't let me go there but said I could go to America if I wanted."

"This was when you were nineteen, so it must have been in 1926. Is that right?" I inquired.

"That's right. I boarded the steamship Columbus at Bremerhafen in 1926. I remember paying a little over two hundred dollars for my third class ticket, and it wasn't very comfortable. The showers only had salt water. They took it directly from the Atlantic. I landed in New York and went through customs and immigration at Ellis Island. From there I went to Buffalo where my aunt lived, and they found a job for me as a cabinet maker. I made eighty-five cents an hour and was for a while quite satisfied."

"It's interesting that while Howard Darrin had gone to Europe a couple years earlier to establish himself
(Continued overleaf)



in the coach building business, you came to America to learn the trade," I interjected.

"Yes, it seems backwards. My first job in the coach building business came when I went to Pierce-Arrow. I had heard that they paid a buck an hour, so I thought I would try. I got hired at once to work in their experimental shop building prototypes and other special cars. I worked for Pierce until Studebaker took them over, and we in the experimental shop were told to work on the assembly line or not work at all. I chose to quit. But before this happened, I remember finishing a special limousine for President Hoover's inauguration."

"So this was your first contact with automobiles." I commented. He was talking quite enthusiastically now, and it was obvious that he was beginning to enjoy the dive into his memory. I was beginning to appreciate his special kind of humor, and my self-confidence was restored.

Mister Stoessel stroked his graying hair from his forehead back to his neck, and continued telling me about his early experiences in America.

"Yes, that was my first real contact with cars. My parents never owned one, but I remember looking at an Opel in Germany before I went to the States. If I had only had the money! But enough of that. When I quit at Pierce, 'wanderlust' overcame me, and I decided to go to California. Three of my friends and I took the Greyhound bus across the continent. We stopped in Cleveland and Chicago and Denver. I tell you, we had a good time! We sang on the bus and played guitar and mandolin."

"Who played the mandolin?" I wondered.

"None of your business," he said jokingly but aggressively and tried to hide his embarrassment. "When we arrived at the bus depot in Los Angeles I had only twenty-five bucks in my pocket, and I blew that money in Mexico the first weekend we were there, when we went to Tijuana. Somehow I made it back to Los Angeles and started to walk around to the different furniture shops to see if they had any openings for a cabinet maker. Bluebird Furniture on Alameda Street hired me. I made sixty cents an hour. It wasn't much, but at least I had enough for food. This was 1929 you have to remember, and there were already a lot of people without work."

"When did you get back to coach building again?" I asked in an effort to swing the conversation back to the experiences leading up to his work on the Darrin.

"That came next. I went to Kirchhoff in Pasadena. He had been general manager for Murphy Coach-builders before he started his own shop. When he heard that I had worked for Pierce he gave me a job immediately, and I made a buck an hour again. One of the cars I remember working on there was a front-wheel drive Miller for a man in Santa Barbara. We had only ninety days to finish the job and Kirchhoff wanted me to make the pattern for casting the windshield frame. I had never done this before, but he gave me some books on the subject and it turned out all right."

"You also built L-29 Cords, didn't you?" I sidetracked.

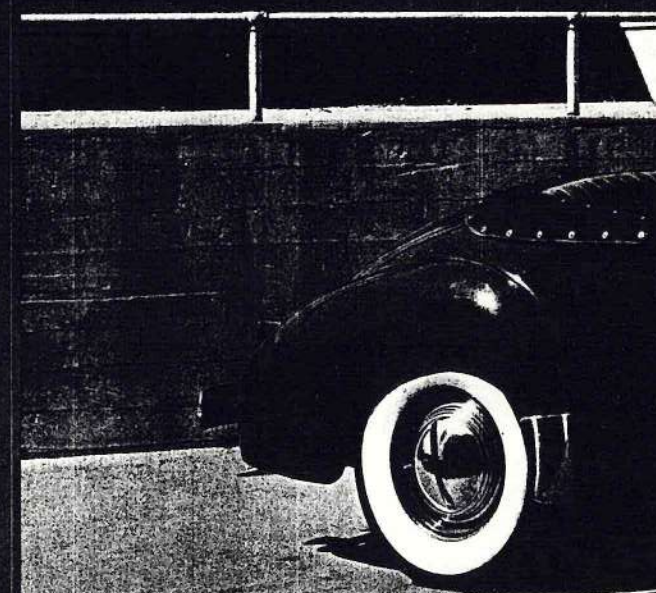
"Yes, but that was when I worked for Fuller. He was the Auburn-Cord-Duesenberg dealer and had a shop on West Market Street in Los Angeles. We built two cars for E. L. Cord himself. One was a coupe, the other one a towncar."

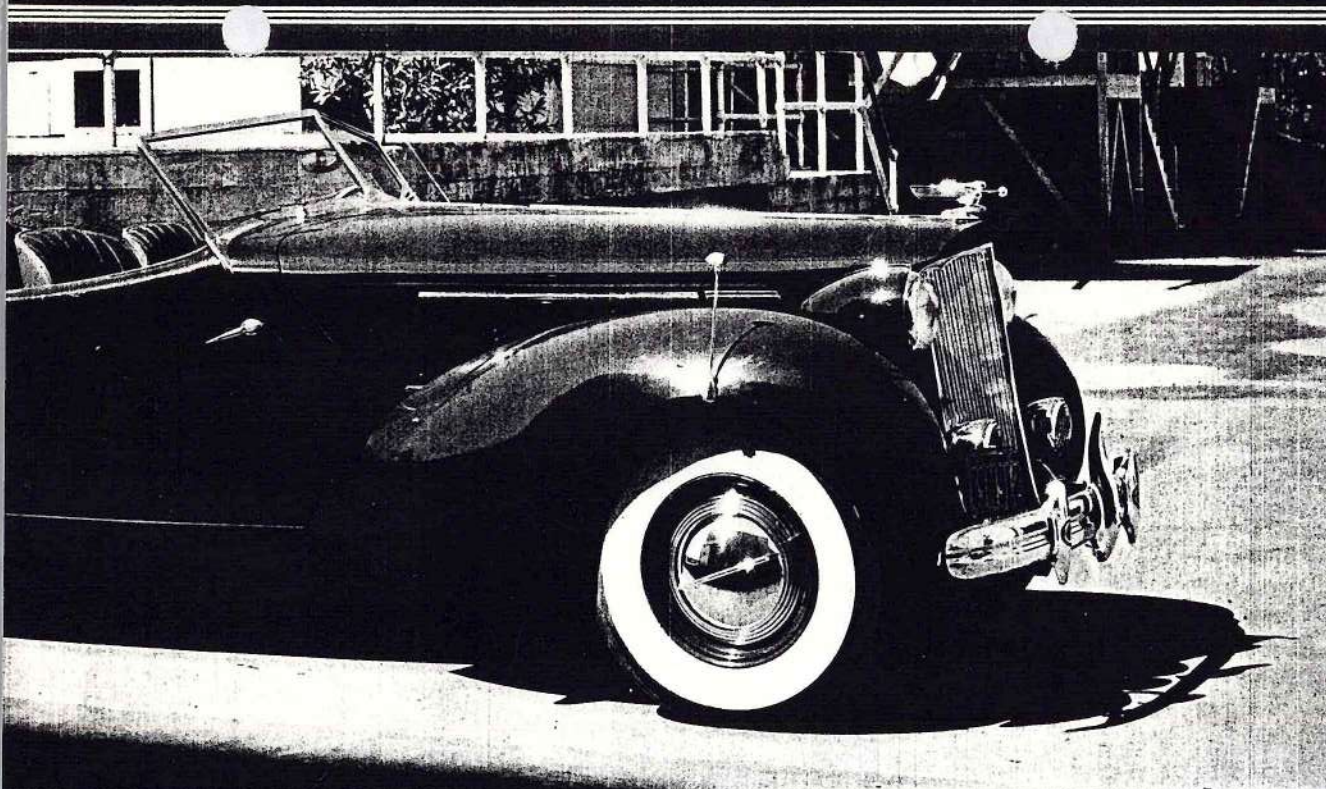
"So by now you were really established as a well-known craftsman in the coach building business?" I inserted.

"Yes and no. The worst was yet to come. I went back to Kirchhoff again for a while, where we built a Duesenberg touring towncar for a woman by the name of Ingraham. This was in 1932 when the depression really hit hard. When we finished the Duesenberg I had to look for another job. At Kirchhoff I had made a buck twenty-five, but now I had to be satisfied with forty cents. Soon I was out of work for good. I managed to get twelve hundred dollars on my life insurance and lived on that for a year until I got a job again building armored cars, ambulances, Coca-Cola trucks and so on."

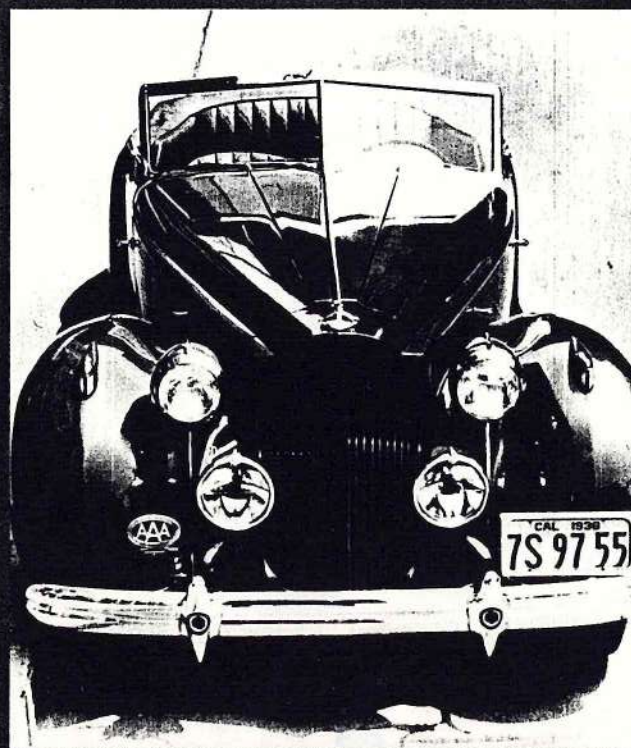
"Just for orientation, what year was this?" I wondered.

"It must have been 1938, because it was when I was working on a refrigerated milk truck at Standard Auto Body that Howard Darrin walked in one day and asked if I wanted to work for him. He had two special Packards under way at Crown Coach, but he wasn't happy with their work and wanted to set up his own shop. He had leased a place on Sunset where





Featured in these photographs are different models of the early Packard Darrin. The picture above shows one of them parked on a movie lot in Hollywood. Mr. Darrin found most of his customers among the movie-making set—stars like Clark Gable and Chester Morris. This particular car came out at the end of the series, at which time the runningboards were eliminated. To the left, two Darrins are parked outside the shop on Sunset Boulevard. Notice the presence of the runningboards. To the right is a frontal view. It is interesting to compare this photo with the frontal view on the previous color spread. This reveals the differences between the original Darrins made in Hollywood and the factory production run from Connersville.



Sunbeam Market is today, and I went with him to look it over. I was fully convinced when he showed me his twenty-five thousand dollar bank account."

"So you completed those two first Packard Darrins?" I continued.

"Yes, those two were for Clark Gable and Chester Morris. They created so much demand that Darrin decided to make a series of them. The concept was to use as many stock body panels as possible from the standard eight-cylinder Packard but then rework them to give an effect of a complete custom design. The most important element in the process was the special cowl. It was a kind of centerpiece. Darrin made the drawings, and I interpreted them. A new windshield was done the same way. The alterations also included custom doors, new seat structures, top bows and modifications to the rear deck."

"How exactly did you make the cowl?" I asked.

"It was made in three sections: the top and the two sides. I made the patterns out of wood exactly the way I wanted the finished aluminum casting to look. But the tricky part was that the pattern had to allow for shrinkage. Aluminum shrinks three sixteenths per foot when it cools off. So the patterns had to be made that much larger. The finished pattern was then turned over to the foundry. They put it in some kind of mixture of molasses and sand and then filled the impression with melted aluminum. That was the first casting. It had to be cleaned and finished off perfectly and then another casting was made. That was the final one."

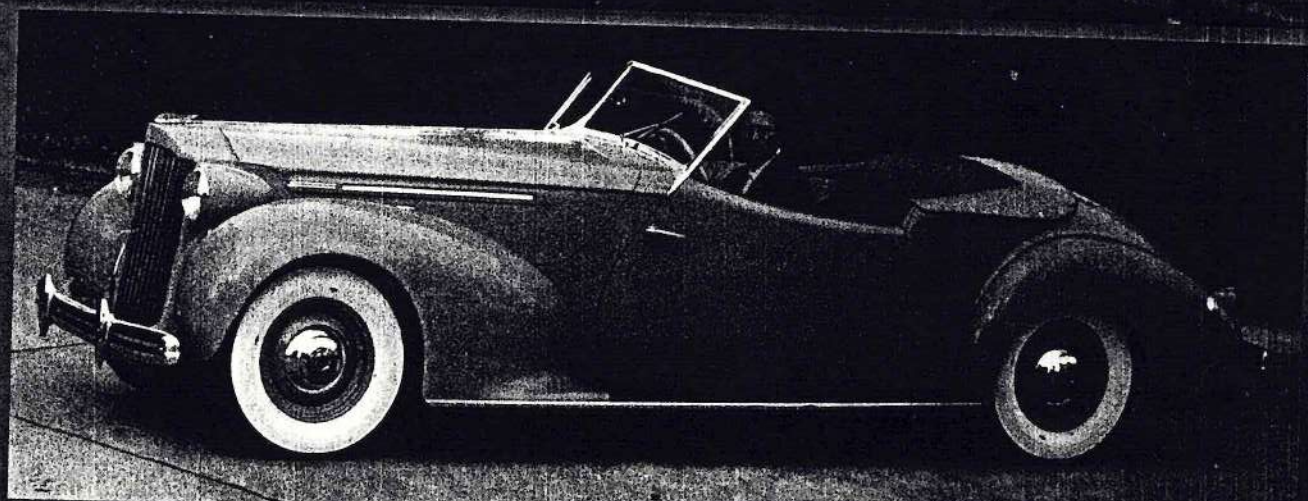
"And in 1939 it was time to start your own business?" I continued. That year Howard Darrin had been asked by the Packard Company to move to Connersville, Indiana, where he was to direct the factory production model of Packard Darrins. He closed down his shop, and Mister Stoessel was out of work again. But this time he was well established. And he started Coachcraft with two of his co-workers. Today, more than thirty years later, he is still going strong.

"It was a good thing you didn't go to Russia," I said jokingly as the interview came to an end.

And he said, "Oh, I would have become a commissar, I'm sure!" throwing his head back in a good laugh.

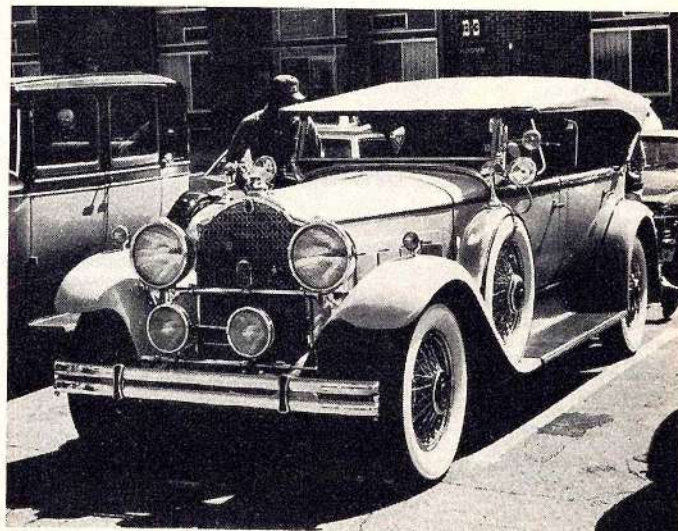
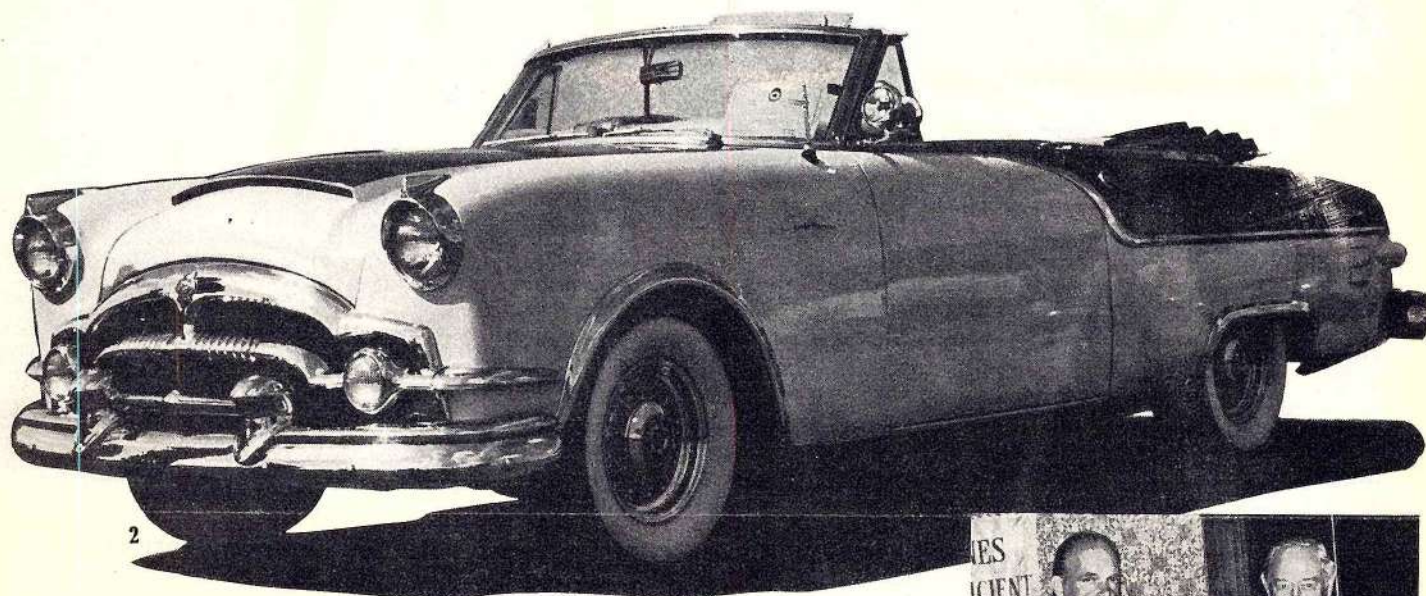
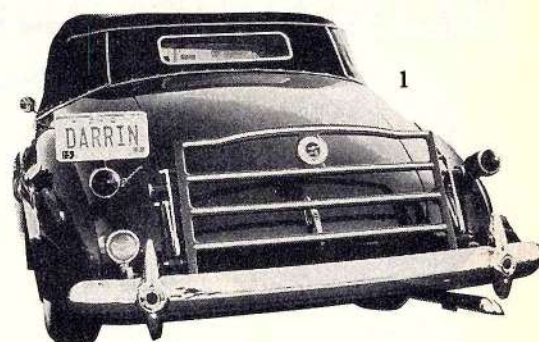


The photograph above was taken in 1938 and shows Rudy Stoessel in the process of fitting the special aluminum cowl on a partly disassembled Packard body. The work was performed in Howard Darrin's shop on Sunset Boulevard in Hollywood. The cowl, which was the most essential part of the customizing, was patterned for casting by Mr. Stoessel. To the right is the finished product, the Packard Darrin, with Mr. Darrin himself behind the wheel. To the left, a recent photograph of Mr. Stoessel shows him continuing his art in his own shop, Coachcraft of Hollywood.



All-Packard meet features 121 cars and James J. Nance

By Robert Jay Stevens



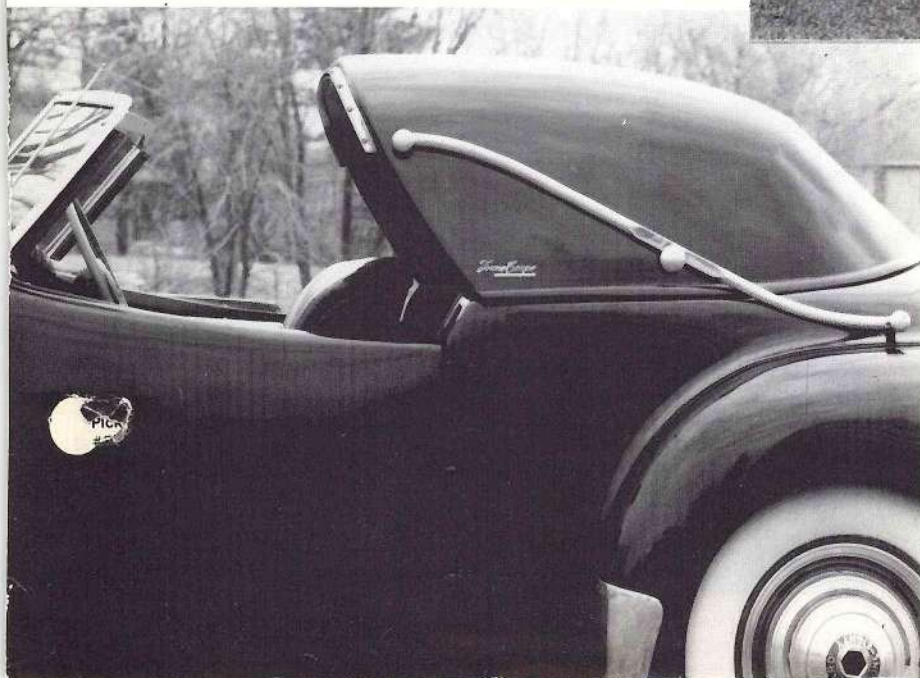
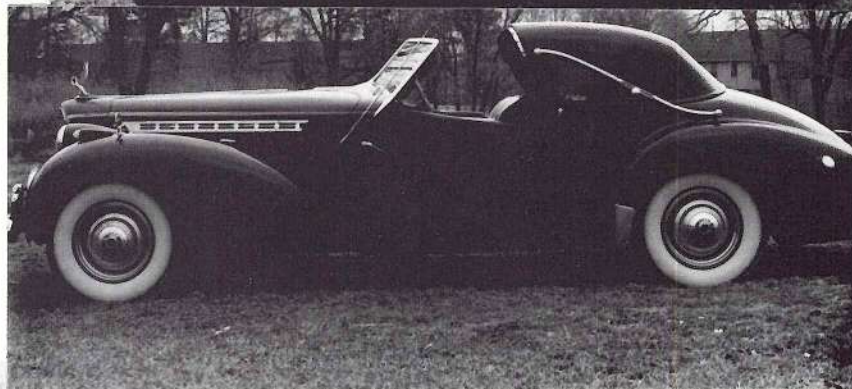
(then of Cincinnati, now of Ft. Myers, Fla.) who had found it in a farmers field a few years previously and restored it along with a 1940 4 door convertible Darrin which has changed ownership a number of times since then, being re-restored along the way. Both cars were black with red interiors whereas the 4 door is now a dark metallic blue with a pale grey-blue interior when I saw it last at the Indianapolis Grand Classic a few years ago. My Towne Coupe is still black with red wheels and an all red interior - seats, headliner, and carpets. Although I understand that during the body stripping every conceivable color was exposed so the original color is unknown.

Many people ask if the hardtop is removable and it is not. It is permanently attached although it seems to be of another material than the body, aluminum perhaps? A canvas top is fastened in front by snaps on the windshield frame and in the back by snaps on the chrome channel on the front edge of the hardtop. Unlike the victoria, however, the rear seat is impossible for anyone over 5 feet tall but - oh those lines!

The upholstery was done by a fellow who upholstered ambulances and hearses at Hess and Eisenhardt, the Cincinnati Company who originally assembled the 1941-42 Darrins.

When Tom was restoring the car I said it would be the most beautiful of his collection and I've never changed my opinion and never tire of admiring it. Hope your readers enjoy it too.

John W. Stuck
371 Oregon St.
Cincinnati, Ohio 45202



As a new member of Packards International, I was made aware of the "mystery" status of my Darrin Towne Coupe via a back issue of the P.I. quarterly magazine - Summer, 1977 - "Packard's Last Great Custom Motor Cars," by Arthur G. Abrom. In answer to the question, "where is it today?" It's been right here in Cincinnati, Ohio since 1962 when purchased from a Mr. Tom Hauss

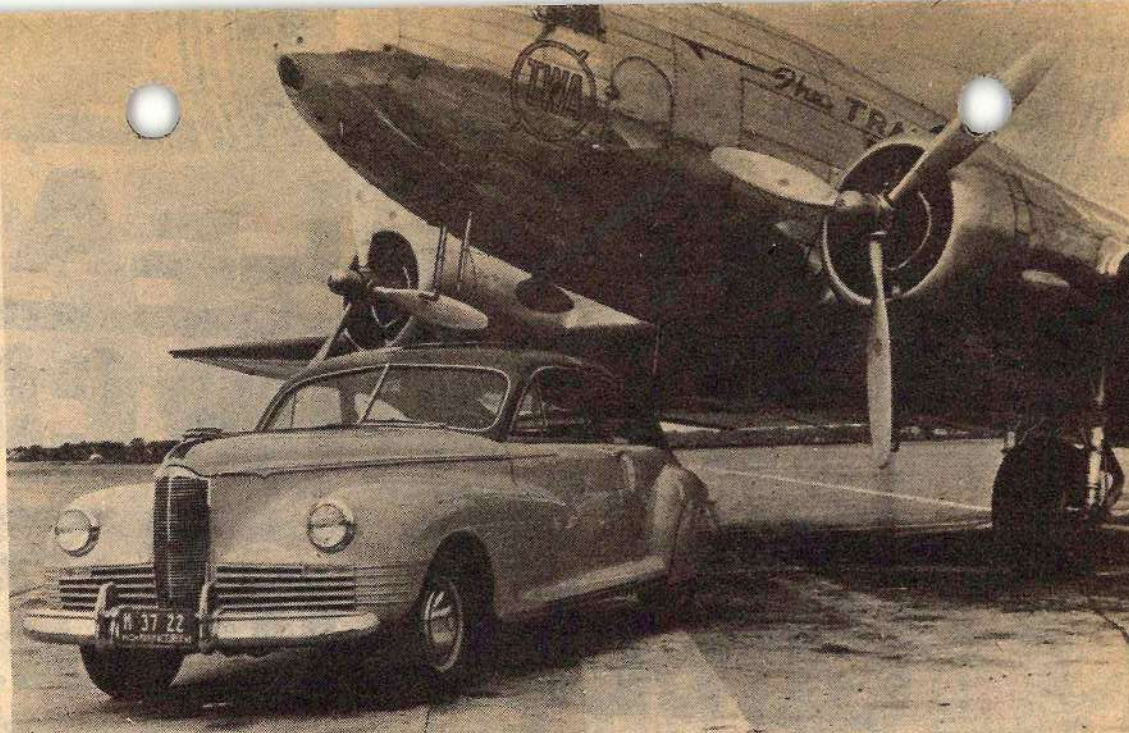
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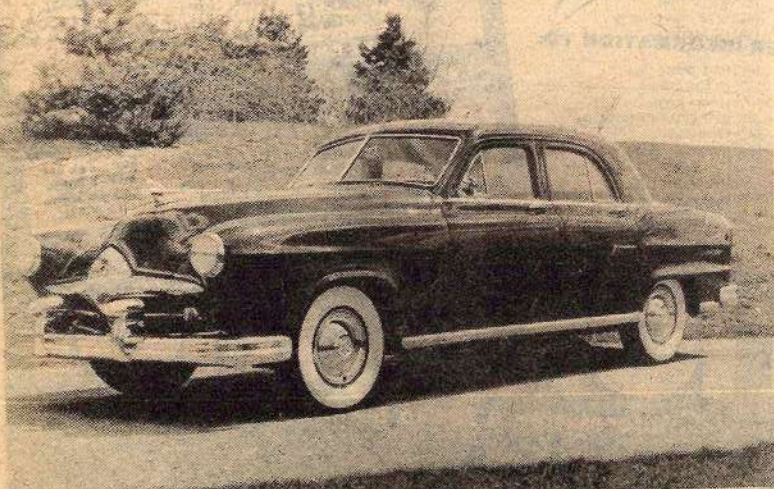


A 1941 Packard Darrin Clipper convertible.

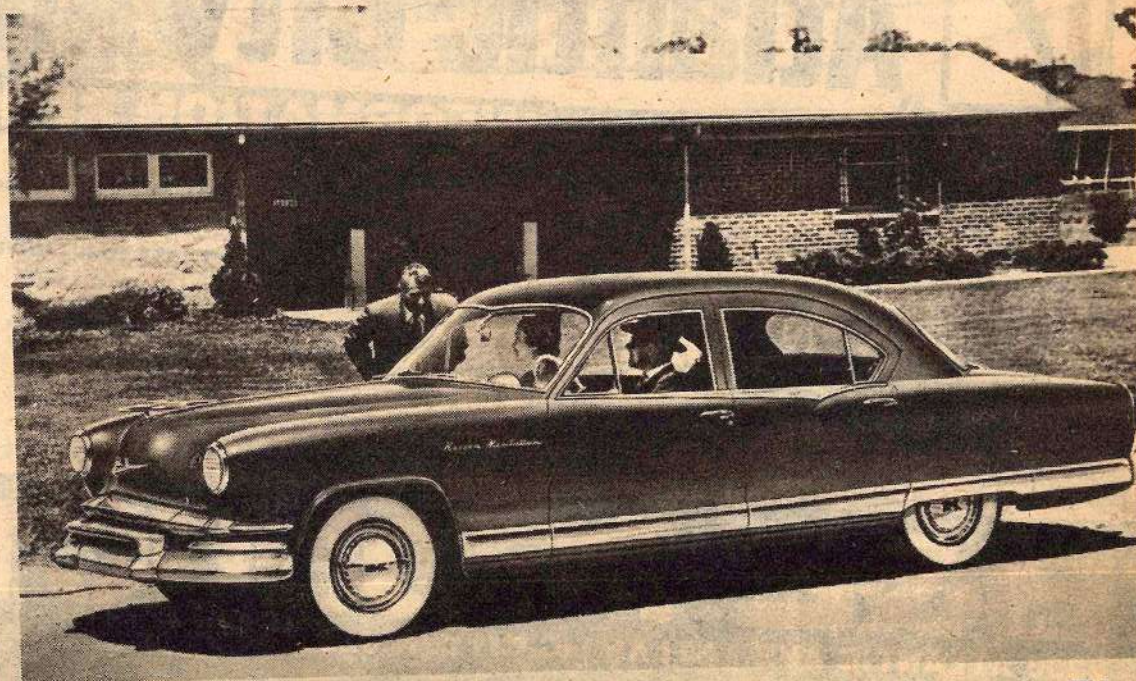
A Salute To The Work Of Dutch Darrin



The 1941 Packard Darrin Clipper coupe was revolutionary when introduced. The 1942 General Motors cars would ape this look.



The Darrin influence was evident in the entire line of Kaiser-Frazer cars, including this 1951 Frazer sedan.



A low beltline and sleek fender design were highlights of the Darrin-designed Kaiser sedan. This is the 1952 model.

DARRIN

(From page 1)

He decided to stay in the body building business.

In 1934, after collaborating on the design of the 1932 Citroen and several other European cars, Darrin went to South Bend to help out Studebaker. Their budget, however, was skimpy and he wasn't able to make much more than one serious proposal.

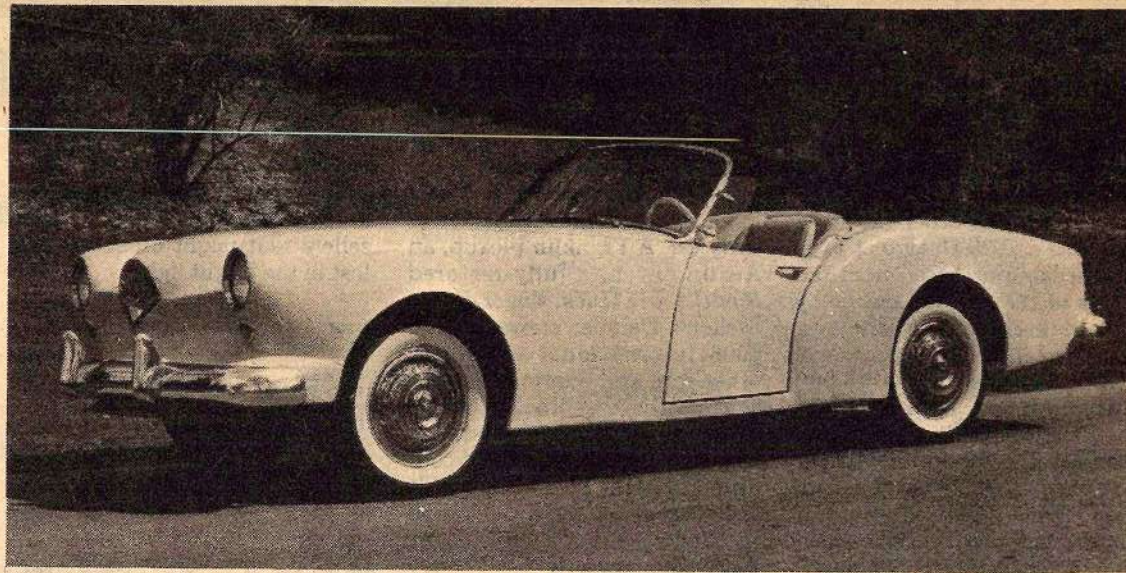
Darrin went to California in 1937 and there he built many one-offs for the monied clientele on the coast. They included Packards, Rolls Royce and Cadillacs. One of Darrin's most memorable designs of the late Thirties was the 1940 Darrin Packard Parisian built on a Super * chassis. The car was sold to actor Donald Meek and was later owned by Jack Oakie.

Darrin once called the association a disaster but immediately after World War II he was looking for a challenge and he found

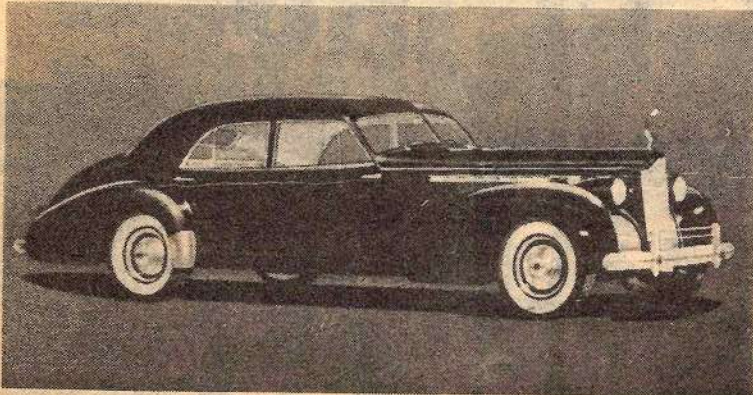
one in the fledgling auto maker, Kaiser-Frazer. Darrin designed the 1951 Kaiser sedan, a revolutionary looking car in its time. Then there was the Kaiser of all Kaisers, the car that Dutch Darrin "sold" to company management. That car was the Kaiser-Darrin. The rakish two-seater was sharply styled but it lacked power and it was handicapped by a company that was falling in around it.

In the late Fifties Darrin sold Kaiser-Darrins in California with Cadillac engines. Since that time, and until his death, Dutch Darrin kept busy on automotive projects and on his writing, which will remain a valuable chronicle of his many achievements.

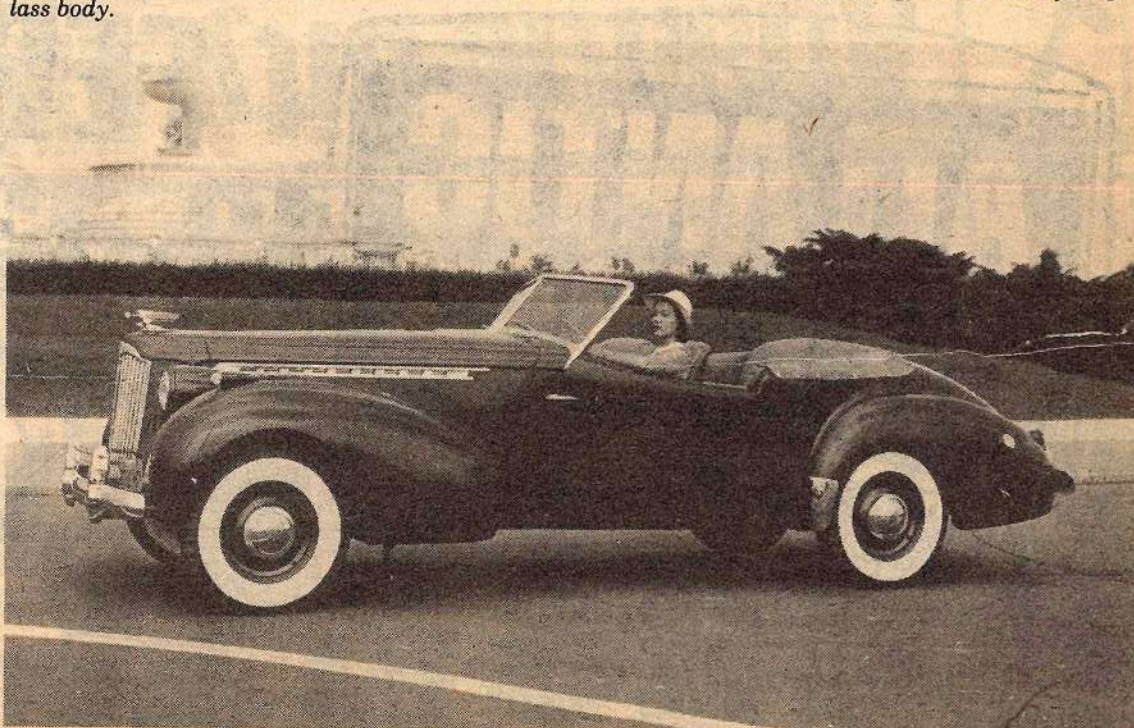
From classic Hispanos and Packards to sporty Kaiser-Darrins, Mr. Darrin left a mark on the automotive world that will not be soon forgotten. The age of the coachbuilder is over but examples of the master's touch have been immortalized in steel.



One of Darrin's best efforts came late in his career. It was the Kaiser-Darrin sports car with fiberglass body.



The 1940 Packard Darrin sedan. One more example of the low Darrin beltline.



The 1940 Packard Darrin combined Packard elegance with the sporty Darrin touch. Notice the cut-down doors.

