



1926 Kissel 8-75 Speedster

Owner: George A. Newhall of Sausalito, California

## K I S S E L

Produced in Hartford, Wisconsin for a quarter of a century, the Kissel was well finished and highly respected—a mainstream Americana kind of car. The brothers Kissel, George and Will, were conservative to a fault, but this did not prevent them from kicking up their automotive heels on occasion. As early as 1913 they had offered the novelty of an "All Year" body with easily removable hardtop. And, although adopting automatic chassis lubrication and balloon tires about the same time as other manufacturers, the Kissels were early to market with Lockheed hydraulic brakes in 1925. But the Kissel heels were kicked up most spectacularly in their Speedster model, which was among the snazziest cars on the road in the thirties. George Newhall's 1926 Speedster is a splendid example. With its Lycoming-derived 287-cubic-inch straight-eight engine generating 75 hp, the car was capable of 85 mph. George acquired his Speedster from its original owner, Adelheid DeRose, in 1973 and declares it "extremely fun to drive and also

much easier to drive than many later Classics." Although the Hartford-built Speedster was fetchingly racy, this particular car presents an even more glamorous appearance—and authentically so. Because Kissel had a strong following among Hollywood celebrities, the California distributor in Los Angeles was given the okay to incorporate special touches not seen

on Kissels sold in other parts of the country. Woodlites were a favorite of this distributor. Further, the loose fasteners for the top of this car allow the entire assembly to be removed for a more thoroughly sporting look. Unfortunately, the Kissel did not survive long into the Classic Era. In 1931, the Kissel brothers formed an alliance with Archie Andrews for production of the Ruxton in the Hartford factory. The deal went awry. Shortly thereafter the Kissel Motor Car Company requested receivership from a friendly creditor.

