



CAM Chronicles

The Newsletter of the California Automobile Museum

Volume 3 No.2

March-April 2026

CAM Chronicles

From the Director's Desk

Dear Friends of the Museum,

It's that magical time of year again. The birds are chirping, the daffodils are in bloom, and according to my calendar *checks notes* it's almost spring!

Here at the museum, spring means three things:

1. We're showcasing a new Rotating Exhibit – this year *Route 66: California Dreamin'*.
2. Convertibles begin making meaningful eye contact with the sunlight.
3. I start saying, "This is the year we're finally going to clean out the shed."

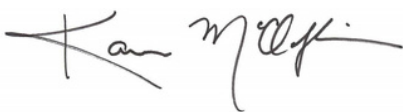
As Director of the California Auto Museum, I like to think of spring the way our cars do. For some, like a perfectly preserved 1957 tail-finned beauty, spring is a glamorous debut season – polish the chrome, roll down the windows, cue the admiring gasps. For others (I'm looking at you, project cars), spring is more of a motivational concept.

Of course, spring also means Event Season is on its way! We're preparing for our Veterans' Memorial Day Car Show, our Homecoming Cruise on Broadway June 20, and our "Evening with Jay Ward" in the fall. Spring feels like forward motion, which is fitting for a place dedicated to machines built to move.

If you haven't visited in a while, consider this your seasonal nudge. Come see what's new. Revisit your favorites. Bring a friend who thinks a carburetor is a fancy coffee drink. We promise to set them straight.

Thank you for supporting the museum through every season – mud, rain, pollen, and all. Now, if you'll excuse me, I have a shed to heroically open, stare at, and close again.

Happy March,



Karen McClafin, Executive Director
California Automobile Museum



Meetings...

Board Meeting	Last Thurs, 5:30 pm
Docent Council	2nd Weds, 1 pm
Exhibits	2nd Thurs, 1 pm
Library	Weds, 10 am
Road Crew	1st Weds, 1 pm

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 916.442.6802



**Make sure you stand out 356 days a year -
 the other 9 days, you're on your own!**

With an approximate market value of \$80,000, this final-year 356C represents one of the most sought-after eras of early Porsche design. Powered by an air-cooled flat-four engine paired with a manual transmission, this final-year example represents the most refined evolution of Porsche's original sports car. Every entry to win supports the museum's mission to preserve, exhibit, and teach the story of the automobile and its influence on our lives. **[Click here to enter to win!](#)**

2026 Board of Directors

Ralph Carbone	David Felderstein
Chandler Knapp	Karen Long
Joe Hensler	Glenn Rondeau
Steve Meyer	John Shirey
Ed Silva	Don Tollefson
John Smith	

Docent Council

Ralph Carbone	Chair
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Jared Seese	Treasurer
Bob Daloia, John Tennyson	Training Co-Chairs
Doug Cook	Training Curriculum
John David	Docent Mentoring
John Tennyson	Secretary
Peter Sandberg	Membership
Greg Alumbaugh/Denny Albrecht	Events
Frank DeBernardi	Communication

Volunteer Leaders

Ken Rothaus	Car Club Cavalcade
Jon Paavola/Eric Seifert	Pit Crew
Terry Emery	Detail Crew
Ron Grantz, Mike Ling	Library
Richard Armstrong	Road Crew
Vacant	Education Committee
Steve Koonce	Exhibits Committee

Museum Staff

Karen McClaffin	Executive Director
Scott Mikkelson	Vehicle Sales Coordinator
Sol Goldman	Vehicle Sales Assistant
ShaVolla Rodriguez	Curator
Katie Martin	MarComs Manager
Tamara Samsa	Office Manager
Ellie Montgomery	Ed & Collections Coord
Lauren Trask	Event Rentals
Derrick Jurrison	Maintenance
Toni Elgamiel	Event Rental Assistant
Evan Spoonhunter	Guest Services
Nayeli Rodriguez	Front Desk Relief
Mario Pulido	Janitorial



Get Your Kicks at CAM!

By Katelyn “Katie” Biddle Martin, Staff Reporter

If you’re looking to get your kicks on Route 66 in time for the 100th anniversary of the Main Street of America, you don’t have to go far!

Route 66: California Dreamin’ just opened at the California Automobile Museum (CAM), inviting visitors from all around the world to explore a century of California history through the lens of the Mother Road. The exhibit features a collection of gorgeous cars from across the decades, from the Tin Lizzies of the Great Depression, to the armored vehicles that trundled down Route 66 in the years of World War II, to the road trippin’ icons of the 1950s and 60s. Visitors can explore a vintage gas station, meet an alien around Area 51, and more!

Out of the 11 cars on display, we’re spotlighting three in particular here - though all of the members of this colorful cast are spectacular!

The first of those three is the 1928 Packard 443 Roadster, in all of its terracotta glory. This beauty is considered by many to be the finest automobile of its day, and that reputation shines in everything from the wood and leather dash to the Goddess of Speed hood ornament. This model is huge, with a 143” wheelbase, and only 7,800 were produced in its main run in 1928!



Moving down the decades, the next in our selection is the 1955 Chevrolet Bel Air Nomad. This red-orange behemoth was made to wander on road trips, as its name suggests, and it was the most expensive Chevrolet in the year it was produced. It also boasts the rarest body style for that year, due to its mid-year introduction. This particular Nomad has won a number of awards at the Ironstone Concours d’Elegance, Palo Alto Concours d’Elegance, and various other car shows!



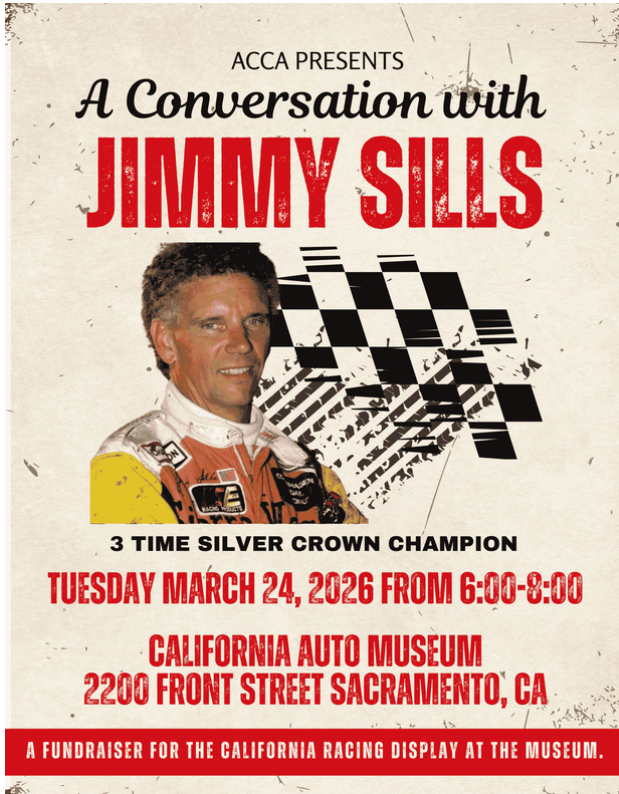
The last in our triple feature is the 1962 Chrysler New Yorker Wagon. This luxury wagon is a true rarity, with only 793 units produced in 1962. This version notably does not feature the “B-pillar” between the front and back doors, and is the last Chrysler to have a 126” wheelbase. This one was restored by renowned Chrysler collector and restorer Mike Porto before being bought by its current owner.



Whichever vehicle in our latest exhibit will be your favorite, it’s sure to be iconic - and you can’t pick until you visit and see them for yourself! This exhibit will be at the California Automobile Museum throughout 2026, and you can visit Wed. - Mon. from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Don’t miss *Route 66: California Dreamin’!*



Events



On March 24, 2026, USAC Hall of Famer and leader of one of America's most renowned Sprint Car Racing Schools, Jimmy Sills, will be at CAM!

Enjoy a speaker program, Q and A, and refreshments, all while sitting in the California Automobile Museum's Racing Gallery! This event takes place at the museum from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

[Click here to get your tickets!](#)



Join us for a car show celebrating the fantastic collections of our docents and volunteers! On March 21, 2026, our front parking lot will be filled with cars of all kinds. We'll see you on the 21st at the California Automobile Museum from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Free with paid museum admission, members completely free!

Are you a docent or volunteer at CAM and want to participate? Email Ken Rothaus at krothaus@pacbell.net!

Events (Cont.)

3.28.26 10 - 2
Featuring local DJ artists Albumrevolution and Duchess

FOR THE RECORD



Vinyl Vendor Fair • Local DJ Sets
Free with paid admission at the California Automobile Museum

Vintage vinyl lovers, rejoice! Set the record straight at For the Record, a vinyl vendor fair at the California Automobile Museum! We'll have local DJs spinning and hundreds of records for you to add to your collection on March 28, 2026, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

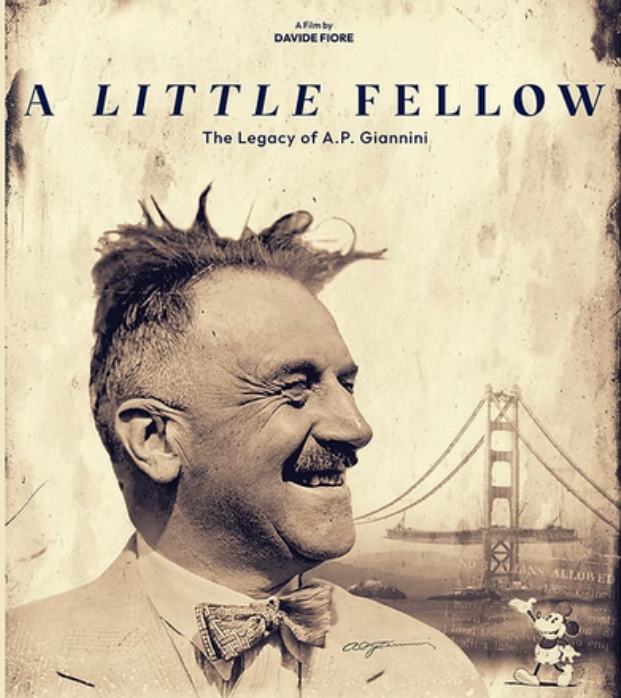
This event is free with paid museum admission. CAM Members get in free!

Swing by and grab some new wax!

A Film by DAVIDE FIORE

A LITTLE FELLOW

The Legacy of A.P. Giannini



CALIFORNIA AUTOMOBILE MUSEUM

Documentary Screening
April 16, 2026, at CAM

Learn more about the legacy of A.P. Giannini at this special documentary screening! Enjoy a screening of the film, a Q & A with the Director, Davide Fiore, a cash bar and concessions available for purchase. We'll even have Giannini's personal 1933 Lincoln on display!

Join us from 4 to 7 p.m. on April 16, 2026. Click below to get your tickets!

[Click here to get your tickets!](#)

Events (Cont.)



CALIFORNIA AUTOMOBILE MUSEUM

Capitol Carrera 2026

April 25 - 26 \$345 Per Car

Join Us On a Car Tour Through Northern California!

Join us for Capitol Carrera, a fun driving and social event for cool cars and great people! This event is an untimed road rally where the focus is on the journey rather than the speed. Plan to travel roads and see places you've never experienced before! Space is limited - get your spot reserved now! 1980 or older cars are preferred.

Registration includes rally decals, lodging, and all activities!

For more information and registration, scan above or visit

Calautomuseum.org

Join us for Capitol Carrera, a fun driving and social event for cool cars and great people! This event is an untimed road rally with surprises along the way, where the focus is on the journey rather than the speed. This trip takes place from April 25-26, 2026. Plan to travel roads and see places you've never experienced before! Space is limited - get your spot reserved now! 1980 or older cars are preferred. Learn more and sign up by clicking below!

[Click here to sign up!](#)



THE CALIFORNIA AUTO MUSEUM PRESENTS:

THE HOMECOMING BROADWAY Cruise 2026

HOSTED BY: THE TOWER DISTRICT

SAVE THE DATE

JUNE 20th

CALIFORNIA AUTOMOBILE MUSEUM THE TOWER DISTRICT



Save the date for Broadway Cruise: The Homecoming, driving down Broadway on June 20, 2026! Celebrate the history, art, and community of cruising at this inaugural event. Keep an eye out on our socials, website, and emails for more information!



St. Louis to Oklahoma City

By Glenn Rondeau, Board Member and Newsletter Editor

In 1922, US 66 was originally Route 14, connecting St. Louis and Joplin. In 1926, it was designated a national highway - US 66. In Missouri, the highway ran from downtown St. Louis at the Mississippi River to the Kansas state line west of Joplin. The history of US 66 in Oklahoma can be traced back to two auto trails: The St. Louis, Missouri, Las Vegas, New Mexico, main route of the Ozark Trails network, and the Fort Smith, Arkansas Amarillo Texas, Postal Highway. In the state highway system, approved in mid-1924, the portions of these in Oklahoma, which crossed at Oklahoma City, became SH-7 and SH-3 respectively. (1)

The route between St. Louis and Springfield was an old road. It had traditionally been a Native American trail, known as the "Osage Indian Trail." By the mid-19th century, settlers laid a telegraph line along the road. The Trail continued south from Springfield to Fort Smith, Arkansas. It was then dubbed the "Wire Road" and later the "Old Wire Road" after the telegraph line came down. The highway subsequently became part of the Ozark Trail.

Missouri was the first state to erect a historic marker on US 66. It is located at Kearney Street and Glenstone Avenue in northeast Springfield. A new marker, designating the highway as a National Scenic Byway, was erected May 5, 2006. The historic alignment in Missouri is marked based on the 1935 route. At Philipsburg, I-44 was built some distance away from US 66 and passed through Marshfield, which was the birthplace of astronomer Edwin Hubble. (2) US 66 enters the Ozark Mountains. at Rolla, about halfway between St. Louis and Springfield. US 66 intersected with US 63 as Bishop Avenue, passing the Missouri University of Science and Technology. The university's half-scale model of Stonehenge is located next to the highway at the curve.

Cuba, known as Mural City, has art and sculpture throughout the town and along the Route 66 corridor. Its restaurants are a frequent stop for Route 66 travelers. Among the sites along Route 66 in Springfield are the Abou Ben Adhem Shrine Mosque and the site of Red's Giant Hamburg, which was the first ever drive-thru restaurant in the world. (3)

Kansas

The 13.2 miles of US 66 in Kansas retain much of the character of the Mother Road. It passes through Baxter Springs, Riverton, and Galena in Cherokee County. In 1929, US 66 in Kansas was paved, Kansas being the first state to do that.

Buildings and structures on the National Register of Historic Places in Kansas include the Baxter Springs Independent Oil and Gas Service Station (now a tourist information site for US 66 in Kansas), the Brush Creek Bridge, and the Williams' Store in Riverton. A 1.2-mile section of the road between the Missouri state line and Galena is listed on the National Register as the Kansas Route 66 Historic District - East Galena. *Cont. on page 9*





St. Louis to Oklahoma City Cont.

Continued from page 8

In addition to the roadway, the district includes seven box culverts, a triple box culvert, and the Galena Viaduct. Although the roadway and all the structures were built during 1922–23, about three years before Route 66 was designated as a federal highway, it was deemed that “as a group these elements, together with their setting, form a cultural landscape that clearly conveys the historic feeling of Route 66.” (4)

Oklahoma

The history of US 66 in Oklahoma can be traced back to two auto trails—the St. Louis, Missouri–Las Vegas, New Mexico, main route of the Ozark Trails network, and the Fort Smith, Arkansas–Amarillo, Texas, Postal Highway. In the state highway system, approved in mid-1924, the portions of these in Oklahoma, which crossed at Oklahoma City, became SH-7 and SH-3, respectively. US 66 was designated in late 1926, and followed these state highways with one exception: a new SH-39 was created to carry Route 66, leaving SH-7 at Commerce and heading east and north to the state line in the direction of Baxter Springs, Kansas. The short stub of SH-7 north of Commerce remained until it became part of US-69 in the mid-1930s. (5)

As with the rest of US 66 in Oklahoma, most of this segment follows SH-66, with a number of older alignments that take US 66 through many of the communities along the way. Believed to be the single worst incident of racial violence in American history, the bloody 1921 outbreak in Tulsa has continued to haunt Oklahoma. During eighteen terrible hours on May 31 and June 1, 1921, more than one thousand homes and businesses were destroyed, while credible estimates of deaths range from fifty to three hundred.

By the time the violence ended, the city had been placed under martial law, thousands of Tulsans were being held under armed guard, and the state’s second-largest African American community had been burned to the ground. (6)

In 1925, Tulsa businessman Cyrus Avery began his campaign to create a road linking Chicago to Los Angeles by establishing the U.S. Highway 66 Association in Tulsa, earning the city the nickname the “Birthplace of Route 66.” Avery also influenced the construction of U.S. routes 64 and 75 through Tulsa. (7)

Oklahoma City

Oklahoma City was a significant stop on U.S. Route 66 during the early part of the 20th century; it was prominently mentioned in Bobby Troup’s 1946 jazz song “(Get Your Kicks on) Route 66,” made famous by artist Nat King Cole. US 66 was signed in Oklahoma City by 1929. Its initial routing entered from the west on 39th Street and turned south on Classen Boulevard, and east on 23rd Street.

Before World War II, Oklahoma City developed significant stockyards, attracting jobs and revenue formerly in Chicago and Omaha, Nebraska. With the 1928 discovery of oil within the city limits (including under the State Capitol), Oklahoma City became a major center of oil production. Post-war growth accompanied the construction of the Interstate Highway System, which made Oklahoma City a major interchange as the convergence of I-35, I-40, and I-44.

SH-66A became part of US 66 by 1956, when the new road (now I-35) was built from the Turner Turnpike north to US 66 east of Edmond. *Cont. on page 10*



St. Louis to Oklahoma City Cont.

Continued from page 9

The old route via Edmond became SH-66 (and SH-77, since it had replaced US 77). The business route was deleted on March 5, 1979, and at about the same time, the new route of the West Expressway, bypassing Classen Circle, was completed. (8)

- (1) State of Oklahoma, Preliminary Designation of the State Highway System Archived September 25.
- (2) Sonderman, Joe. "A Bit of Missouri 66 History" Retrieved November 18, 2014.
- (3) "Some history and things to see when you stay at the historic Best Western Route 66 Rail Haven". Archived November 29, 2014.
- (4) "Kansas 66". Kansas Highways. Archived from the original on September 27, 2007. Retrieved May 2, 2008
- (5) State of Oklahoma, Preliminary Designation of the State Highway System Archived September 25, 2006, at the Wayback Machine, approved August 28, 1924
- (6) The Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture, Overall, Michael, August 23, 2020.
- (7) "As Survivors Dwindle, Tulsa Confronts Past," The New York Times, Sulzberger, A.G. June 20, 2011.
- (8) Oklahoma State Highway System 1927, archived at The Wayback Machine, Progress Map as of November 1, 1927





Scrapbook

THE RED CEDAR INN

Pacific, Missouri, had little commerce in the early 20th century except for mining silica for use in making fine glassware and in the production of construction materials such as the bricks used in the Red Cedar Inn. The silica came from large caverns in bluffs just north of town that are still visible to drivers on Route 66. Pacific got a major boost in 1932 when Route 66 arrived. Shortly thereafter, the Red Cedar Inn opened with Route 66 right at its front door.

Route 66 provided a life-changing business opportunity for brothers James and Bill Smith. The two made their living for nearly a decade bootlegging liquor from the family farm at Villa Ridge. When Prohibition ended in 1933, so did their livelihood. Both brothers opened legal taverns--Bill in Fenton and James in Eureka. At the same time, they built the Red Cedar Inn on newly designated Route 66.

Opened just after Prohibition ended, the Red Cedar Inn is an atmospheric, full-service restaurant serving cocktails. Located at the edge of Pacific and close to St. Louis, the restaurant became popular with travelers on Route 66 and with celebrities like St. Louis Cardinals pitcher Bob Klinger and his wife and friends, such as famed ball players Dizzy Dean and Ted Williams. (1)

The Smiths cut logs from their family farm, hauled them to the Red Cedar site on a one-ton Ford truck, to build their restaurant. Even before they opened the doors for business, Route 66 was carrying hungry out-of-state customers past the front door. The Red Cedar Inn was an immediate success, allowing the Smiths to add a bar to the restaurant in 1935. In its early years, the inn provided gasoline service from two pumps in front of the building. Gasoline sales were eventually halted to focus efforts on the restaurant business.

Once the brothers were finished building the restaurant, they handed management over to James II. James II later married one of the restaurant's waitresses, Katherine Brinkman, and they bought the business from James I in 1944. They ran the business with their children, James III and Virginia "Ginger" Smith, until 1972, when James II retired. The inn was leased for some time before being temporarily shuttered until 1987. [1] Katherine, James III, and Ginger reopened the restaurant in 1987, and it was managed for several years by Wes Karna.

Continued on page 12



Continued from page 11

In April of 2003, the Inn was listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The town celebrated the designation on July 11 with speeches, a caravan, and music. The town's fire truck raised a huge American flag high on its boom, and a local teen sang "Get Your Kicks on Route 66." A caravan of old cars arrived, a color guard marched, and the crowd sang "The Star Spangled Banner." Meanwhile, a train passing on nearby tracks slowed to a stop until the singing ended. When the music stopped, the train conductor blew the whistle and traveled on down the tracks. (2)

(1) "Red Cedar Inn. Pacific, Missouri". nps.gov. National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior.

(2) "Red Cedar Inn: Where Past and Present Come Together." Show Me Route 66 Magazine





Car Club Cavalcade

March - Good Intentions Car & Bike Club

Good Intentions is a lowrider car club based in the Sacramento area that hosts car shows and community events. The club is featured in the California Automobile Museum’s Car Club Cavalcade lineup, scheduled for March 2026 in Sacramento. They organize events like their annual car shows, which feature custom vehicles, raffles, food vendors, and activities for families in the North Highlands and surrounding communities.

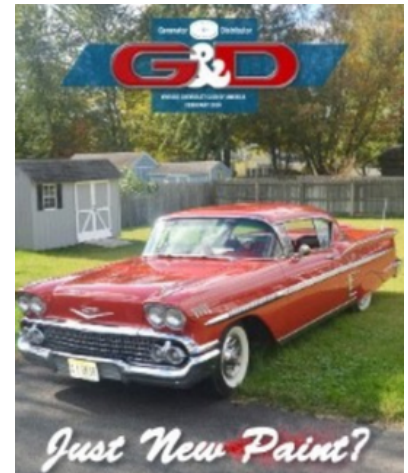


April - The Vintage Chevrolet Club of America

The Vintage Chevrolet Club of America is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the preservation, restoration and enjoyment of Chevrolets and GMCs. Members receive 12 issues of the monthly magazine, Generator & Distributor, and can also take part in the many activities sponsored by the VCCA, including our “members-only” chat room, tours, swap meets, car shows, regional meets, judging, technical advice, and a National Anniversary Meet every five years, commemorating their founding in 1961. Next meet is in 2026.

In June of 1961, twelve Chevrolet collectors and enthusiasts met and created a non-profit organization for the preservation and restoration of old Chevrolet cars and trucks. This organization became known as the Vintage Chevrolet Club of America, Inc.

In the past 60+ years, our membership has grown worldwide with members not only in the United States, Canada and also numerous International countries. With a membership of over 6,000 folks, we have many years of Chevrolet experience with fellow enthusiasts and technical advisors who specialize in particular model and years.





New on the Floor

By Glenn Rondeau, Board Member and Newsletter Editor

One of the most fascinating sports cars of the 1960s is also one of the least well-known. The Sunbeam Tiger was an early hybrid that combined a European car powered by a big American engine. Its predecessor, the Alpine, was introduced in 1959 and produced through 1968.

The model was the progeny of British marque Sunbeam, owned by the Rootes Group, and a Carroll Shelby scheme that stuffed Ford's then-new 260 CID small-block V-8 engine under the hood. The Tiger has a fascinating history, although its life was short through no fault of its own.

In 1962, Carroll Shelby officiated the marriage between the British AC roadster and the Ford small-block V-8. The result was the Shelby AC Cobra. On the coattails of that car's success, Shelby and Sunbeam made a "baby Cobra" prototype in 1963, shoehorning that same Ford V-8 into the Rootes Group's Sunbeam Alpine. Shelby and his dynamic organization in Venice, California, went to work. By the end of May 1963, the first prototype was running, and after a short road test had confirmed all expectations, the car was then taken to Riverside Raceway for high-speed testing. At this point, Shelby and Garrad decided to consult Ken Miles, one of California's star sports car racers, and himself a highly skilled racing car constructor, to help with the chassis and suspension.

The showing of the car to Lord Rootes himself was awaited with some trepidation, as he was renowned for his meticulous approach to engineering. Had this prototype resembled a "Hot Rod" or failed to meet his stringent requirements in quality control, the project would be finished. The apprehension was short-lived. The showing was an immediate success. Ian Garrad briefly explained the details of the car and gave performance figures, which were received with faint disbelief until Lord Rootes, an ex-racing driver himself, took the car out.

With Garrad as passenger, the car was given its final and most critical test.

To the delight of everyone concerned, only minor modifications were needed. Otherwise, the car was perfect. Under the supervision of Phil Remington, 5 pre-production cars were built by Shelby. Development was quick, and the resulting car was introduced at the 1964 New York Motor Show. That same year, three racing prototypes, built by Brian Lister, competed - but failed to finish - in the 24 Hours of Le Mans. (1)

After an hour's run, Lord Rootes pulled in through the gates to where his two sons, Geoffrey and Brian Rootes, together with a group of engineers, had been anxiously waiting. The smile on their Chairman's face was enough - words were unnecessary - the Tiger was born.

Assembly of the Tiger - which Shelby originally wanted to handle - was ultimately contracted to Britain's Jensen Motors. Altogether, 7,128 examples of the Tiger were constructed: 6,495 examples of the first-generation Mk I, made through 1967, and the 633 produced of the Mk II.

The demise of the Tiger was yet another bungled chapter in British automotive history, the Rootes Group having been taken over by Chrysler in 1967. Mopar had no V-8 engine suitable for the tiny Tiger, which had barely an inch to spare within the cramped engine bay. Impending pollution and safety requirements meant that a complete redesign would be required, thus the Tiger's fate was sealed. (2)

(1) The Robb Report, Robert Ros August 22, 2025

(2) The Tale of the Tiger, Road & Track 1965 Road Test Annual