



CAM Chronicles

The Newsletter of the California Automobile Museum

Notes From the Director...

Happy Fall! I don't know about you, but I'm so excited about the changing temperatures (anything below double digits is wonderful, amiright?), autumn leaves, yummy soups, Raider football, Halloween decorations, and sweata weatha!



As with all seasons, Fall brings change. And change can be uncomfortable. We're going through a lot of changes at the Museum, and some are indeed uncomfortable – we are renovating our Racing & Performance Galleries, which is great(!) but it means we have an “under construction” area of the museum devoid of pretty cars progressing excruciatingly slowly; we just finished our office update after 3+ months of being crammed together in a non-air-conditioned room while we waited; we installed heaters months ago, but can't turn the gas on until we get our final inspection with the City (again, taking forever!), so we have no hot water...still.

All of these changes will eventually result in functional and beautiful additions to the Museum, but the process of change can be difficult, just like the changing of seasons brings with it a melancholy for what is ending. So at the moment, I feel like a muffler – EXHAUSTED!

Bottom line is – we've got a lot to offer, so don't miss out on all the fun! I hope it's a good change of season for you, and I hope we'll see you at CAM soon!

Karen McClafin

Calendar of Events...

The Hensler Collection: Thru Jan 25

Meetings...

Board Meeting	Last Thurs, 5:30 pm
Docent Council	2 nd Weds, 1 pm
Education Committee	Last Weds, 1 pm
Exhibits	2 nd Thurs, 1 pm
Library	Weds, 10 am
Road Crew	1 st & 3 rd Weds, 1 pm

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 Sacramento, CA
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 916.442.6802



Thank you to everyone who helped support the Museum in our two recent fundraising events - CruiseFest and An Evening with Chris Jacobs! We appreciate those who purchased a ticket or reservation, contributed financially and/or volunteered for one or both of the events. Both events raised over \$70,000 for the Museum, so we're thrilled about the results! Here's a recap:

CruiseFest 2024 had over 425 cars participating - Model Ts to McLarens - and over 10,000 spectators. We had beautiful weather, sold a lot of beer, and had a great time overall ogling all the beautiful cars and visiting with their owners!

Our Evening with Chris Jacobs was also a great success. We had nearly 200 people attend the dinner where we enjoyed a VIP meet-and-greet with Chris, silent and live auctions, and raised almost \$30,000 for bathroom improvements.

Thanks again to everyone who helped make these events so successful. *Karen McClafin Executive Director*



Founding Director: Dick Ryder

2024 Board of Directors

- | | |
|-------------------|---------------|
| Ralph Carbone | Mary Davis |
| David Felderstein | Jim Ferguson |
| Alan Galbraith | Karen Long |
| Joe Hensler | Steve Koonce |
| Steve Meyer | Glenn Rondeau |
| Ed Silva | John Smith |
| Don Tollefson | Tom Tyer |

Docent Council

- | | |
|------------------|-----------------------|
| Ralph Carbone | Chair |
| Dick Sullivan | Vice Chair |
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| Doug Cook | Training Curriculum |
| John David | Docent Mentoring |
| Sharon Taylor | Secretary/Membership |
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| Glenn Rondeau | Newsletter Editor |
| Mike Whelply | Past Chair |
| Frank DeBernardi | Communications |
| Duwayne Brooks | |
| John Tennyson | At Large |

Volunteer Leaders

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Ken Rothaus | Car Club Cavalcade |
| Dave Eichner | Pit Crew |
| Mike Willis | Detail Crew |
| Ron Grantz, Mike Ling | Library |
| Dave Frank | Road Crew |
| Dick Sullivan | Education Committee |
| Jim Ferguson | Exhibits Committee |
| John David | Mentoring Coordinator |

Museum Staff

- | | |
|--------------------|-------------------------|
| Karen McClafin | Executive Director |
| Mike Stiles | Vehicle Sales Manager |
| Sol Goldman | Vehicle Sales Assistant |
| ShaVolla Rodriguez | Curator |
| Khalil Bourgoub | Marcoms Manager |
| Tamara Samsa | Office Manager |
| Ellie Montgomery | Guest Services |
| Lauren Trask | Event Rentals |
| Cheema Singh | Maintenance |
| Dieter Stenger | Accountant |
| Daphne Ruffing | Volunteer Coordinator |



Exhibits & Education

CAMprofiles

Personalities at the California Auto Museum

Joe Hensler

President, CVF Board of Directors

Married for nearly 48 years, Joe is the father to 4 kids and 8 grandkids. He was born in Illinois but went to high school in Miami, Florida. He's a graduate of Florida State University with an accounting degree in 1976. His first post-education job was as a tax auditor for the state of Florida who transferred him to Chicago.

Looking for more income, he answered an ad for a forklift salesman which ultimately led to becoming a forklift dealer in Sacramento in 1987. He grew the business to include agricultural equipment (JohnDeere and Kubota) plus construction equipment, with a total of 5 locations. He also started a container rental business and ultimately owned 2000 rental containers.

He and his wife Gayle sold off all businesses starting in 2002 with the last sale being John Deere Redding, Ca in 2019. Fortunately, they had purchased all of the business locations which is the core of the commercial real estate investments today.

He has always been a car enthusiast. One of his brothers probably sparked the interest by taking him to races and car events.

The first new car he bought was a Ford Pinto, which he autocrossed. Starting in the '80s, he raced sprint and then enduro karts. In the '90s, it was back to autocrossing with a purpose-built Triumph Spitfire with a built Mazda rotary. Joe took the SCCA drivers school in 2002 where he raced a Honda Civic SI in endurance races and a Spec Miata for sprint races, which ended in 2009.

Joe and Gayle currently own 24 classic cars, 18 of which are currently on display in the museum in the rotating exhibit area. Currently under restoration are a 1970 Porsche 914-6, a 1971 DeTomaso Pantera and a Ford hot rod.

Joe has been involved in the museum since 1987 when he had his first business Christmas party there. He was asked to join the Board in 2006 and was involved in hiring Karen McClaflin as ED (both times!). He was elected Board President in 2008 and was involved in purchasing the building. He left the Board in 2016 returning in 2018 serving as Treasurer until re-elected as Board Chair in 2023. He is a Docent Class of 2010 graduate.



Joe's 18 cars:

- 1939 Ford coupe
- 1941 Cadillac convertible
- 1954 French Ford Comete Monte Carto (Pebble Beach car)
- 1955 Citroen 2CV
- 1957 Atfa Giulietta Spider
- 1959 Chrysler 300 Convertible (Pebble Beach car)
- 1960 Mercedes 220S Convertible
- 1962 Ford Econoline Van
- 1965 Corvette
- 1966 Mustang Convertible
- 1 967 Corvette Convertible
- 1967 Ferrari 330 GTC
- 1967 Austin Healey 3000
- 1969 Jaguar E-Type
- 1972 Ferrari Dino (Concourse Platinum)
- 1980 Cadillac El Dorado
- 2014 Porsche Cayman
- 2023 Corvette C8

1954 French Ford Comete Monte Carlo

An extraordinary collaboration between Ford France and Facel-Metallon, the Ford Comete project was born in 1950. Facel Metallon was a coachbuilding firm that was run by Jean Daninos. The Ford Comete was introduced in 1951 in France by Ford SAF, the Ford Motor Company's French Subsidiary. The Comete was unveiled as the luxury model in the range, and the bodywork was done by FACEL, the same designer of the better-known Facel Vega luxury vehicles under their own name. Produced until 1954, the Comete featured an original engine that was a 2.2 L V8 from Ford SAF of French design. The same engine was found in the Ford Vedette, and a Pont A Mousson 4-speed manual transmission was used.

The Comete was a personal project of Francois Lehideux, a designer formerly with Renault. In 1950 Lehideux took over as the president of Ford. He decided that his newest prestige model should be developed independently of the Ford organization, and to do this, he chose Facel-Metallon to undergo this project.

The Comete project was designed in complete secrecy by Daninos in Italy without even the Ford's own design studio ever knowing until the Comete was unveiled at Biarritz in August 1951. The Comete didn't even carry the Ford badge. In an stunning tribute to the advanced pressing and welding techniques of Daninos, the Comete featured beautifully proportioned lines that were built on a Ford Vedette floorplan.

The Comete featured a severe elegance in its silhouette that was offset by huge steel bumpers, and later, a large egg-crate grille. A ribbed stainless steel dashboard and door handles were displayed on the interior, along with an impressive jet-age three-spoked steering wheel. The steering wheel was a tribute to Daninos work on aircraft design.⁽¹⁾



The design was a collaboration. Facel-Métallon created each Comete's bodywork while Stabilimenti Farina designed it. The prototype was even named Facel-Farina. Before Ford SAF was convinced to go along in this joint venture.

You could say this bespoke cabriolet is a tribute to not just Facel, but also to Giovanni Farina, the founder of Stabilimenti Farina, and elder brother of Battista "Pinin" Farina who learned the trade at his brother's company. The great Italian coachbuilders/designers Boano, Frua, Michelotti and Vignale also started their careers at Stabilimenti Farina. Just like at Carrozzeria Pininfarina the designers didn't get all the credits for their designs.

This was part of the business strategy to keep the Farina name on top of the ballgame and it's easy to understand why so many designers founded their own company after they'd learnt the trade. This approach, with full focus on the company brand instead of individual designers, helped to grow business, but in 1953 Stabilimenti Farina was absorbed into the by then much larger Carrozzeria Pininfarina. 1953 happens to be the year of birth for the Comete we show here. One fine coincidence.

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The Comete combined the elegant style of a body by Fa-cel with the mechanical underpinnings of the Ford Vedette combined with a shortened wheelbase. The rear seat was stylishly designed, especially on the upmarket “Monte-Carlo” version with its two-color leather seat covers, but nevertheless offered insufficient leg space for adults, other than on the shortest and most unavoidable of jour-neys. The Comete originally came with a single, horizontal bar across the grille with a chromed shield of bullet in the center, very similar to contemporary Studebaker products, along with steel wheels with chromed hubcaps. The engine was originally taken from the Vedette, and its meager 60 bhp unimpressed buyers. The Comete was considered to be unreliable and underpowered with its small engine, though the looks and features drew admiration from onlookers.



In October 1952, for the Paris Motor Show, the Comete appeared with an engine enlarged from 2,158 cc to 2,355 cc. Claimed horse-power was raised from 68 hp to 80 hp indicating that there was more to the engine upgrade than simply an increase in the cylinder bore from 66.0 mm to 67.9 mm. (The stroke remained unchanged at 81.3 mm.) The most obvious of several other engine enhancements at this stage was the increase in the compression ratio from 6.8 : 1 to 7.4 : 1, reflecting the appearance of slightly higher octane fuels.^[1] Torque and engine flexibility were also improved and the claimed top speed increased from 130 km/h (81 mph) to 145 km/h (90 mph).⁽²⁾

The public wasn't a big fan of the new engine, as it was not only known as a 'truck engine', but its large engine displacement meant its tax horsepower that was rated at 22CV, making for high road taxes. The 'Monte-Carlo' model came with a fake hood scoop, wire wheels, and a typical Ford egg-crate grille. This vertical and horizontal equally spaced bar grille was called a 'coupe-frites' or a 'french-fry cutter' by the French.



The economy was beginning to grow robustly by the mid-1950s, but the market capacity for cars of this size remained small and Comete sales were correspondingly modest. Above all, sales were handicapped by a list price that was (in October 1953) 65% higher than that for the mechanically similar Vedette. Customers interested in the larger displacement, 3,923 cc, versions were faced with a price for the “Monte-Carlo” (once it became available at the start of 1954) that was 51% higher than that of the spacious four door Vendôme.

During 1954, Ford SAF was sold, and the Comete's final year of production took place under Simca. The Simca Comete Monte-Carlo continued to be offered till July 1955. A total of 2,165 Cometes were produced during its production run, with 699 of them being Monte Carlos.

1. “Automobilia”. *Toutes les voitures françaises 1953 (salon Paris oct 1952)*
2. Automobilia”. *Toutes les voitures françaises 1954 (salon [Paris Oct] 1953)*

From the Library

On October 5th, the Research Library and Archives participated in the Archives Crawl program that included several Sacramento regional libraries and archives. Of the four major host institutions, we set up our display at the Center for Sacramento History. We shared space with the County of Placer and the Yolo County Library staff where we exchanged common ideas and concerns about archives. This year's theme for the program was "Sports in Archives", so we displayed materials ranging from the Glidden Tours to racing books to racing photographs to racing postcards to a Shelby Mustang model car to a Ford Mustang running horse grille emblem (all racing related). The event began at 10 a.m. and ended at 4 p.m. with about 217 archival enthusiasts passing through the doors of our host institution. Overall attendance at the four host institutions was over 600 attendees, a great successful event for such a hot October day that was in the triple digits.

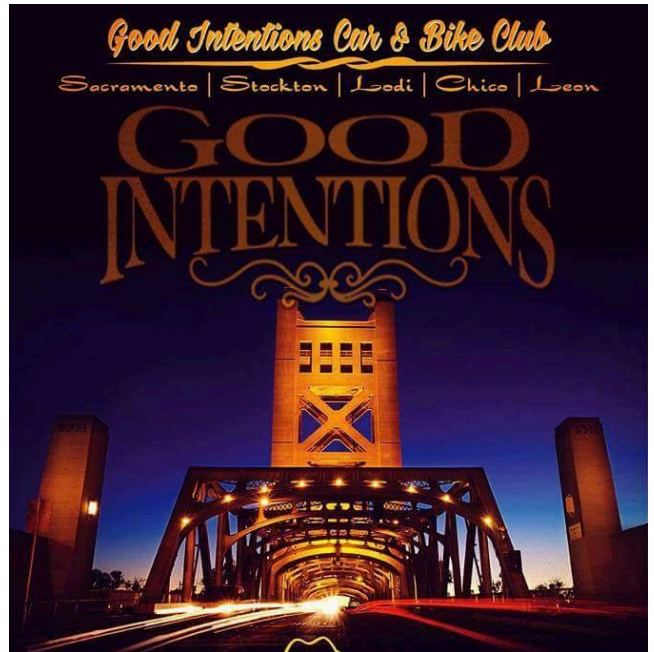
Ron Grantz



CSH is the official archives for the city and county of Sacramento, with public records dating back to 1849. The Center also houses personal collections, photographs, films, and objects pertaining to the social, political, geographic, and cultural history of the Sacramento region. Items in our collection are accessible for research or use in films, books, articles, and other media.

Car Club Cavalcade

December - Good Intentions



New on the Floor -1971 Triumph TR6

The Triumph TR6 was built by the Triumph Motor Company of England. While production began several months earlier, the TR6 was officially introduced in January as a 1969 model year vehicle. The last TR6 was produced on the 20th of July 1976. Of the 91,850 TR6s produced, 83,480 were exported, almost all of them to the United States, while only 8,370 were sold in the UK.



The first production TR6 was built on the 19th of September 1968, as a 1969 model year. All TR6s built until the 28th of November 1968 were carbureted, at which point in time fuel-injected cars were produced on the same production line.

While small changes occurred to the TR6 during its production run, the basic shape and styling cues of the TR6 remained unchanged from beginning to end.

The sharp, chisel-chinned exterior of the TR6 masks a platform that was descended directly from that of the 1953 TR2. The TR6 from the Michelotti-styled TR4. The body was reworked by Karmann, with a nose and tail face-lift; the center section was unchanged.

The Triumph TR6 was the best selling TR with historical record sales just short of 92,000 units sold between 1968 and 1976. Powered by Triumph's 2.5-litre inline six engine that produced 150bhp, paired to a 4-speed manual with over-drive available. The TR6 was a very popular choice for enthusiasts back in the day, given its drastic design from the previous models and the available removable hardtop. TR6's are still very sought after enthusiast since the price-to-performance ratio is very rare to find.

Engine: OHV Inline six cylinder, 2498cc, 150 bhp @5500RPM, Torque 164 lb-ft @3500RPM

Transmission: 4-speed manual all synchromesh, with optional overdrive

Brakes: 4-Wheel Disc

Weight: 1,130 kg (2,491 lb)

Original Price: \$3595

The 40th Docent Training Class will begin Wednesday, January 8, 2025

Our docents, under the leadership of the Docent Council, are the educators for the Museum and the personal outreach to our visitors. We conduct tours and help host special events for organized groups, school classes, and individuals. Most of all we enjoy contact with many interesting people from all over the world.

Interested in becoming a docent?

Where

Sacramento, 2200 Front St, Sacramento, CA 95818

When

Wednesdays (6 pm - 9 pm)

January 8, 15, 22, 29 | February 5, 12, 19, 26 | March 5, 12, 19, 26 | April 2, 9, 16, 23, 30

Saturdays (9 am - 12:45 pm)

February 22 | March 22 | April 26 | May 17 (Graduation)

If you are interested in learning more about the program, please contact [the museum](#) at 916-442-6802 or email Doug Cook (dpcook001@gmail.com).

There are many additional ways to be a volunteer at the museum as well! Head to our "Volunteer" page for a [list of opportunities](#) or contact the museum by email at director@calautomuseum.org to see what would be a good fit for you.



"A warehouse containing only rows of cars but no stories is only a warehouse. Add descriptive signage and live humans full of stories, and you might have a "Museum". Train your storytellers to tell the tales and interpret the artifacts and you have Museum Docents, or at least a good start in that direction."

Bill Millard, Ol' Schoolmaster, 1993- 2023

Scrapbook



OK USED CARS ARE A PART OF AMERICAN HISTORY

For many of us who grew up during the 1960s, we have fond memories of the automotive advertising symbol “OK Used Cars.” This symbol became a great American icon that many enjoyed for years. During the 1950s and 1960s, used-car lots were filled with attractive automobiles featuring nameplates consumers had thoroughly enjoyed. The Chevrolet “OK” used car logo became almost as recognizable as the Chevrolet Bow Tie brand mark. The “OK” concept started during the 1920s as a quality check program, and eventually grew into a warranty plan that attracted customers for many years.



In 1928, a local newspaper advertisement called “OK” a check that showed the sales person what parts of the vehicle had been checked and reconditioned prior to placing the car out on the sales lot. General Motors said this about “OK” used cars: “So when you’re thinking of buying a good used car or a serviceable truck, remember your Chevrolet dealer’s ‘OK’ sign. It must stand for a lot ... Chevrolet Division of General Motors, Detroit, Michigan.”

When selling used cars, one of the most important things a salesman could do was to prospect and look for good customers. Jeff Koch, in a story for a Hemmings publication, said: “Chevrolet’s own used-car division, OK, aimed to make used-car buying respectable. Seeing Fords pop up in advertising produced and paid for by General Motors seems surprising on its face. Why would GM, with all of its strength, want to advertise the other guy’s cars? Well likely because those owners were wise enough to trade in their Fords for a Chevy at the “OK” used cars section of the local Chevy dealer.” Chevrolet’s iconic “OK” used cars were a hallmark of the 20th century American car industry. The origins of the phrase can be traced back to the 1920s when some dealerships were known for selling used cars of varying quality. To distinguish themselves as a trustworthy source for used cars, some dealerships began using the phrase “OK” to indicate that a particular used car had been thoroughly inspected and was in good condition.

Chevrolet officially adopted the “OK” branding in the late 1930s, and it became a vital component of the company’s marketing strategy. The company began creating vintage advertisements that featured the phrase prominently. The ads often featured images of smiling families or satisfied customers standing next to their shiny new-to-them Chevrolet. The ads emphasized the reliability and affordability of Chevrolet’s used cars, positioning them as a smart choice for anyone in the market for a vehicle.



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One of the most notable aspects of Chevrolet's "OK" used cars was the red tag. The tag was affixed to the car, and it was a clear indication that the vehicle had passed a rigorous inspection and was certified by Chevrolet as being in good condition. The red tag was a symbol of quality and trust, and it quickly became synonymous with Chevrolet's "OK" used cars.

Vintage advertisements for "OK" used cars often featured the red tag prominently. Some ads showed customers proudly displaying their newly purchased vehicles, with the red tag visible on the side. Other ads featured the tag in close-up shots, with the tag's bold red lettering drawing the viewer's attention.

During the early years, GM had found many ways to promote their products and sell new and used cars. The colorful "OK" signs were a great way to offer big promotions to bring in large crowds of potential buyers. For many customers, purchasing a used car was the way to go. Used cars were great bargains, and the vehicles were usually reliable. The buyer could get the most value for their money.

Some automotive historians have said that Chevrolet new car sales were so good in the early and mid-1960s that they had placed full-page color advertising in major magazines for their used cars. Chevrolet cars traditionally held their resale value. Many of the "OK" ads that are part of this story came from original magazine ads popular during the 1950s and 1960s.

During the early days, buying a car presented a number of serious problems. The prospective buyer was faced with many choices, in addition to the prospect of considerable expense in owning and operating a used car. In contrast, "OK" Used Cars had completed a series of tests before being sold to the public, including a safety inspection, drain and flush of the cooling system, complete lubrication and tire rotation.

During the 1960s, Livernois Avenue in Detroit was the most popular place to go when purchasing a new or used car in Michigan. Consumers even traveled from around the world to Detroit to purchase an automobile on Livernois. Automotive historians often said that the Chevrolet "OK" sign has always been a great landmark for someone looking for a quality used Chevrolet car or truck.

While the phrase "OK" might seem somewhat unremarkable today, it was a powerful marketing tool for Chevrolet in the mid-20th century. By positioning themselves as a reliable source for used cars, the company was able to build a loyal customer base that trusted their brand. And while vintage ads for "OK" used cars might seem quaint or even cheesy to modern audiences, they serve as a reminder of a bygone era when cars were a symbol of freedom, independence, and the American dream.



*By Robert Tate, Automotive Historian and Researcher
Images from the web and Robert Tate's Collection
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Bibliography:

Genat, Robert. "The American Car Dealership." Motor Books International, 2004.

Koch, Jeff. "Chevrolets Own Used-Car Division, OK, Aimed to Make Used-Car Buying Respectable." OK Used Cars from Hemmings Classic Car.