

On the road again in the USA

Reno, Nevada—Every man has a blind spot and rich men have bigger blind spots than poor men. Bill Harrah spent half a lifetime assembling the world's greatest collection of cars and then forgot to make any provision for its continuation in his will. The people who bought his gambling club found themselves obliged to sell \$80 or \$100 million worth of cars in a hurry.

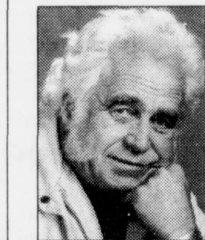
Barely in time, a foundation was formed here. Holiday Inns, who had bought the club, agreed to donate their remaining 200 or so cars if the foundation would build a new museum for them. This was done and people like thee and me can look, but not touch, a collection which is still dazlingly good. You cannot touch because your sticky hands smirch the shine; a siren shrieks if you step too close to one.

Notes from a mere hour in the National Car Museum: The 1934 Chrysler Airflow, whose shape carried over in the world's most popular automobile, the Volkswagen Beetle.

The sign says that the Chrysler company demonstrated the strength of the Airflow's frame by driving one off a hundred foot cliff. It rolled, ended up on its four wheels and was driven home under its own power. I can wear that. That car is me, me!

The 1910 Oldsmobile has 42 inch wheels. The driver sits so far above the common people that the machine had a second step after the running board.

A Model T Ford, 1921,



STRAIGHT WRY

Paul St. Pierre

equipped with foldout beds for six people, table, stove, water supply and food. The sign says the Kampkar was not a success. What might have happened half a century earlier had Henry hired people who could spell?

A Buick, 1900. David Dunbar Buick was a plumber who developed a method of porcelainizing cast iron bathtubs and then turned to making cars, at which he was even better. This one won hill climbing contests. Hands up, who remembers hill climbing contests? The Buick has a valve-in-head motor, an idea the rest of the industry caught up with 75 years later.

The 1934 Dymaxion, designed by Buckminster Fuller before he brought us the geodesic dome. It steers from the single wheel at the back, turning so fast you can almost meet yourself when

cornering. It's only car in history to have adequate rear vision. It's done by periscope.

A 1937 Hispano Suiza. King Alfonso of Spain liked them so much he bought 30 of them, before the civil war. In the V12 575 cubic inch motor the engineers achieved the magic number, the square engine.

Mr. Harrah had a one of a kind himself. This is a 1977 Ferrari, combining Ferrari and Jeep in a four-wheel drive that could handle Nevada winter snows at speeds up to 225 kph.

Nope, wrong. Bill Harrah died in his bed.

Dr. Nathan Ostich, a Los Angeles dentist, spent lots and lots of money building a turbojet engined single seater called the Caduceus with which he tried to achieve 500 miles an hour. He should have kept to digging root canals. It only hit 359 and it looked like a crab's dinner.

However not everything odd is ugly.

Ed "Big Daddy" Roth had to make the plastic bubble top of his Beatnik Bandit in a pizza oven but the Beatnik Bandit, which is here, and its partners, Yellowfang, Wishbone and Great Speckled Bird, not only dazzled the eye but were truly innovative. For acceleration, braking and

steering, the driver used a single, short joystick.

The Edsel is present, without the jokes. Harrah's experts, and he hired them by the hundreds, rate it as deserving better than it got.

The sign says some of the buyers were put off because the front grill looked like a horse collar but Freudians have another explanation of the grill effect in an industry which had always put male symbols on the front.

There are several old Packards, surely some of the most handsome machines ever to roll rubber over blacktop.

The ticket on a 1900 model reveals that in 1898 J. W. Packard bought a Winton and complained about it. Mr. Winton said he couldn't care less whether Mr. Packard liked his product or not and that if Mr. Packard was dissatisfied he could go take a flying leap at building a better car himself.

Famous words. Packards occupied and held a particular niche in the market from 1900 to 1958 and in a better world, would still hold it today.

The best do not always win in the automotive trade. Go back and look at that Chrysler Airflow.

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