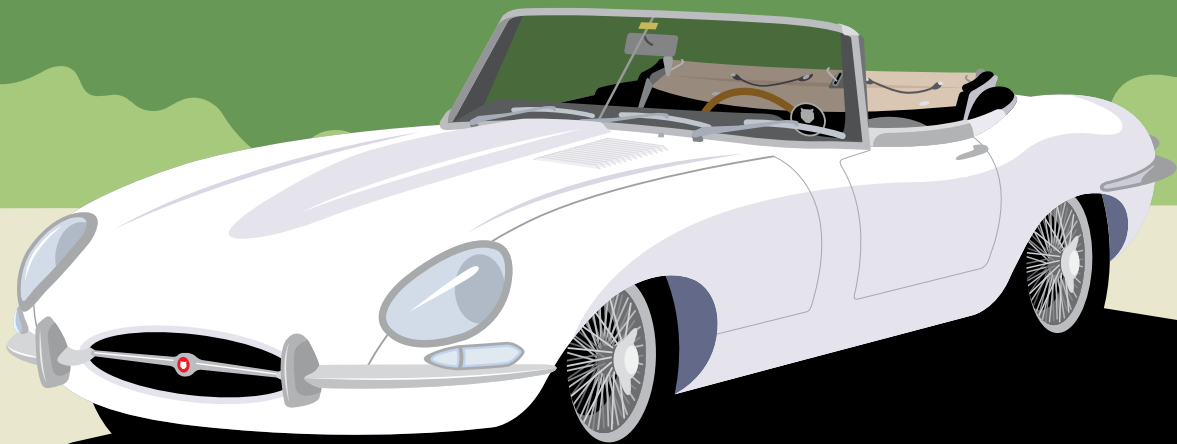




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1963 JAGUAR  
E-TYPE ROADSTER SERIES 1

# Icons of British Motoring

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2025 SPECIAL DISPLAY CLASSES

100TH ANNIVERSARY OF CHRYSLER | INDIAN MOTORCYCLES | AUTOMOTIVE ODDITIES: THE STRANGE AND WONDERFUL

**BENEFITING JUVENILE ARTHRITIS**

# Icons of British Motoring



Jaguar XK 120



Aston Martin DB MkIII Coupe



Jaguar XK 120



MG-TC

## For Americans, British Auto Heritage Meant Lots of Sports Cars

By Jim Koscs

Some 15 years before trailblazing TV newscaster Walter Cronkite described The Beatles' frenzied 1964 United States debut as a new "British Invasion," the country's former colonizer had already established a major fun beach head here through very different means: sports cars.

Lively two-seaters were not the only British automobiles to make an impact on America, of course. The U.S. also became a critical market for British luxury and grand touring cars from Aston Martin, Bentley, and Rolls-Royce. Some lesser-known outside enthusiast circles included Alvis, Bristol, Jensen, and Lagonda. Those were all very low-volume cars, though. It was Britain's sports cars, sold here through the 1970s, that left a lasting mark on millions of drivers and admirers alike. Many auto historians

agree this rich vein of British motoring heritage started for Americans with the 1945-1949 MG TC.

### "Export or Die"

An early 1970s advertisement for the MGB, by then in production about 10 years, displayed it alongside a TC under the headline "The sports car America loved first." According to an oft-told automotive tale, American servicemen stationed in England bought TCs and shipped them home, sparking wider interest.

Perhaps a few officers were able to do that, but the real story behind the TC was industrial policy. After WWII,

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1947 Bentley Mark VI Fioni et Falaschi Coupe

Photographs by Gary Kessler



Rolls-Royce Silver Ghost

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the British government prioritized exports to bring in much-needed foreign currency. “We must export the things we like, to buy the things we need,” urged an official government animated short film, “Export or Die.”

The timing was right; American car enthusiasts were ready to fall in love with sports cars. The MG TC was among the first to arrive in quantity, but with just 10,000 made, and with its pre-war design and right-hand drive limiting appeal, sales volume was low. Impact was more significant. American racing heroes Phil Hill and Carrol Shelby started with TCs, the little MG giving Hill his first win.

MG’s improved TD and TF followed, now with left-hand drive but still wearing pre-war designs. By the time the modern MGA arrived in 1955, it had company from the Triumph TR series and Austin-Healey 100, so-named for its top speed. Also wearing a badge conveying top speed capability, Jaguar’s dashing XK 120 introduced in 1948 brought higher level performance to both road and track. Its inline double overhead-cam six-cylinder engine would remain a cornerstone of Jaguar identity for over 40 years, including in a bevy of influential sedans like the Mk. II and XJ6.

### Winning Hearts ... and Races

Britain’s strategy worked brilliantly and delivered driving joy to many.

“Certainly, after the war, sports car exports helped rebuild the British economy and satisfied a different kind of appeal lacking in the American market,” explained Richard Frantz, president and judging program chair of the Cincinnati Concours d’Elegance.

“The first British car that I sat in was a Triumph Spitfire in the early 1960s, way before I could drive. I can still picture myself sitting in that car with bucket seats down low and the shifter in the middle. It was just so different than sitting on the big bench seats in American cars.”

Named for the fighter plane that heroically defended Britain in WWII, the tiny Spitfire exemplified fun-per-dollar mastery and became a racing favorite. Triumph made about 317,000 from 1962-1980, exporting over 40 percent to the U.S. Frantz’s first car was an MGB, which became the most prolific British sports car with nearly 390,000 roadsters and about 125,000 GT coupes made over that same 18-year span.

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MG-MGA



MG-MGB



MG-MGB



Jaguar E-Type Series 1

Photographs by Gary Kessler

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“My dad thought I was crazy for buying it, but it just had so much character,” Frantz recalled.

## World’s Most Beautiful Car

Among iconic British cars of any kind, one stands above the rest, the 1961-1974 Jaguar E-Type. Frantz still owns the 1969 roadster he bought 41 years ago and restored twice.

“That’s probably my favorite,” he said when asked to choose from among his collection. It’s so stylish and gets a lot of attention, and it’s so nice to drive.”

The E-Type was not just strikingly beautiful but was also a technical tour de force when it arrived. Its inline six-cylinder engine rivaled Ferrari’s V-12 for power, and the E-Type had four-wheel disc brakes and sophisticated independent rear suspension, which Ferraris and other premium sports cars lacked at the time.

Legend has it that Enzo Ferrari called the E-Type the most beautiful production car when it debuted. We may never know for sure, but more validating a half-century later was that top auto designers named the E-Type the world’s most beautiful car in Car and Driver magazine. The Jag beat out great classics from Lamborghini, Alfa Romeo, and Ferrari for that accolade. Hail Britannia!



Rolls-Royce Postwar: Silver Cloud



Triumph TR6

Photographs by Gary Kessler



Cincinnati-based photographer **Gary Kessler** captures images that exceed client expectations.

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Honored Collector:

# Jeff Lane

*Admiration for clever engineering inspired a huge collection of “oddball” cars*

The 1955 MG TF displayed by the Lane Motor Museum at this year’s concours was the first car that its owner, Jeff Lane, restored. He received it for Christmas at age 12 as a hollowed-out shell and pile of parts and finished it four years later. His other cars on display might be less recognizable and seem even downright strange, like the 1957 Aurora, a one-off concept car built by a Catholic priest to showcase auto safety ideas.



Jeff Lane

Lane welcomes the “oddball” label ascribed to many of the 500+ vehicles in his collection. The museum in Nashville, TN displays about 150 of those, grouped into four major themes: micro cars, propeller-powered cars, one-off cars, and cars from Tatra, the defunct Czech manufacturer.

Lane does not seek vehicles purely for their weirdness, though.

“I’m a mechanical engineer. I’ve always had a great interest in the engineering, more so than the aesthetics,” he says. “That’s how I gravitated to unusual cars.”

That sentiment helps explain the 50 Citroëns in the collection, most from the 70-year span the French automaker used its innovative hydro-pneumatic suspension. “The leap of engineering from traditional suspension was just incredible,” says Lane, who takes joy in driving his cars.

Lane’s sleek 1973 Citroën SM coupe, powered by a Maserati V-6 engine, might have been the easy choice to drive this year’s Copperstate 1000 road rally through the Southwest. Instead, he chose a 2CV, an economy car Citroën built from 1948-1990, to cover 1,000 miles among classic Ferraris, Porsches, and other sporting machines.

The 1975 model he drove, with about 30 horsepower from a tiny air-cooled two-cylinder engine, can reach 65 mph. In a previous Copperstate, Lane drove an even smaller and less powerful Fiat 500.

## Tiny Cars, Huge Smiles

Though slightly smaller than the original Volkswagen Beetle, the Citroën 2CV towers over the microcars in Lane’s collection. The smallest of those is also noted as the world’s tiniest passenger car, a three-wheel, one-seat 1964 Peel P50 from the U.K. Just 4.5 feet long, it can reach 40 mph.

The Peel and many other minuscule cars in the collection, with equally

obscure names, may appear cartoonish. Lane, however, appreciates their seriousness rooted in providing low-priced mobility. Achieving low construction costs, he explains, demanded small size, along with innovative and sometimes odd engineering solutions.

“They kind of tried everything and ended up doing a lot of neat things,” he says. “Buyers didn’t care what the cars looked like. They were just trying to move up from riding a scooter or bicycle.”

The ugly-cute Peel, for example, lacked a reverse gear. The driver stepped out of the super-light car and lifted it from the rear to move it into a parking space.

## Propeller Cars

Perhaps strangest of all on display, Lane’s propeller-driven French 1932 Helicron looks right out of the old “Wacky Racers” Saturday morning cartoon. He again points to a serious inspiration, in this case airplanes that were starting to carry passengers in that era.

“A few innovators thought propeller power would be the wave of the future for cars, trains, buses and boats,” he says. Propeller power succeeded for airboats plying Florida’s Everglades and elsewhere but proved impractical in other applications.

“In the context of the times, it seemed like something worth trying,” Lane says. And that is the spirit he loves about his “oddball” cars.

— Jim Koscs



*Chrysler and Indian Motorcycles featured with special classes in the 47th Annual Concours*



1941 Indian Four



1931 Chrysler CG Imperial Roadster

Photographs by Gary Kessler

## *Profiles in American Resilience*

By Jim Koscs

# INDIAN



Honored with special judging classes for the 2025 Cincinnati Concours d'Elegance, Chrysler and Indian stand as two American icons with a shared heritage of innovation and trendsetting. Chrysler profoundly impacted the auto industry, while Indian motorcycles supported American forces in wartime and sparked deep loyalty among civilian riders and racers.

Both marques also share a history of setbacks and comebacks. For 2025, Chrysler celebrates its 100th year, and Indian is riding proudly following a successful revival in 2011.

### The Rise, Fall and Revival of America's First Motorcycle

The Indian Motorcycles saga started in 1898 when bicycle racing champ George Hendee started making bicycles under the Indian brand in Springfield, Mass. When he saw engineer Oscar Hedström's "pacer," a motorized bicycle used to block the wind for pedaling racers, he saw a different future. The two joined to build these for a larger market, becoming America's first motorcycle maker. Innovations, racing victories, and sales success followed.

Indian introduced the first American motorcycle V-twin engine on a racer in 1906 and a street model the following year. The company's motorcycles earned racetrack victories at home and abroad, and riders set remarkable durability records. In 1914, Erwin Baker raced an Indian from San Diego to the East Coast in a record 11 and a half days on unpaved roads, earning the nickname "Cannon Ball Baker" from media. The next year, he traversed California from Canada to Mexico on an Indian in three and a half days.

Banking on durability for troops, scouts, and messengers in WWI, the U.S. Army bought about 50,000 Indian motorcycles. Indian's famous Scout had arrived in 1920 and the larger Chief two years later. The maker officially became Indian Motorcycle Company in 1923, leaving the 'r' out of 'motorcycle' at first. Indian also made a series of four-cylinder motorcycles from 1927-1942.

A merger with E. Paul du Pont's luxury car maker in 1930 saw Indian flourish under new ownership, even as the car business ended.

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1947 Indian Chief



1914 Indian Hendee Special

Photographs by Gary Kessler



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When military duty called again for WWII, Indian supplied more than 35,000 motorcycles to Allied forces. Despite the official Indian Motorcycle Wrecking Crew race team's dominance on paved and dirt tracks, the motorcycle maker struggled in the postwar period, facing stronger competition from Harley-Davidson and British manufacturers. Production ended in 1953, though subsequent owners offered smaller Indian-branded imports for many years.

The Indian trademark bounced among various owners, with several attempts at a revival sparking keen interest. Enduring success finally came in 2011 under Polaris Industries, and today Indian builds a line of modern Scout and Chief V-twin models in Spirit Lake, Iowa.

### Chrysler Celebrates 100 Years of Tenacity

Chrysler marks its 100th anniversary this year, with a century of prosperity and adversity filling the rear-view mirror. The company's choice to name its recent electric concept car Halcyon, which can mean prosperous, seems like cause for optimism.

The company emerged when former Buick president Walter P. Chrysler took control of Maxwell, then reorganized and renamed it. The first Chrysler car, a six-cylinder touring model revealed in 1924, set benchmarks for engineering, style and value. These attributes became foundational for the company, including the Dodge, DeSoto, Plymouth, and Imperial divisions it added.

Noteworthy engineering and designs followed, even if not all seemed successful. Though the 1933 Airflow's aerodynamic body doomed the car



to market failure, its unitized body construction and advances in handling and ride quality would influence the industry.

In the Fifties, Chrysler's Hemi V8s powered many models and attracted racers with their performance and durability. A new TorqueFlite automatic transmission and torsion-bar front suspension imbued the mid-decade "Forward Look" designs with impressive driving performance, epitomized by the Chrysler 300 series. Unfortunately, build quality glitches marred the 1957 models, damaging the company's reputation.

New highly regarded "wedge head" V8s replaced the Hemi in 1958, and a financial scandal in the executive suite rocked the company two years later. The cars, though, were still advancing, with the 1960 models moving to unitized body construction, forecasting an eventual industry-wide shift for American car makers.

The mid-Sixties brought crisp new designs, and a second-generation Hemi V8 propelled the Dodge and Plymouth divisions to NASCAR and drag racing glory. The 1971 Imperial luxury model showcased Chrysler's engineering daring with the industry's first electronically controlled four-wheel anti-lock brakes, though the option did not catch on at that time.

Lackluster products nearly ended Chrysler in the early Eighties. A revival under former Ford Motor Company president Lee Iacocca steered a return to prosperity, and Chrysler showcased its brave spirit with the hugely successful and highly influential minivan. The next four decades brought bold Cabin Forward designs, business mergers, and a long-running revival of the Chrysler 300 luxury-performance model with a modern Hemi V8.

Chrysler continues today under the global Stellantis umbrella, with optimism for more halcyon days ahead.



1936 Chrysler Airflow



1970 Chrysler Hemi Cuda



1930 Chrysler 70 Royal

Photographs by Gary Kessler