

PACKARD

“ASK THE MAN WHO OWNS ONE”

It is next to impossible to remember an advertising slogan for any product with more endurance than the one applied to the Packard automobile, which dates back to its earliest years. Automotive slogans often die even during their campaigns! And, if you had accepted these instructions during Packard's golden years, you would have interviewed a group that would have trumped Larry King's or Barbara Walters's show guests. It would include emperors, tsars, and kings: Nicholas II of Russia, King Alexander of Yugoslavia (who owned a record 48 Packards!), the Queen of Spain, the Emperor of Japan, the Shah of Iran, the Aga Khan and the Maharani of Porbander. Roosevelt and Stalin were chauffeured in armored Packard's. Harry Truman was furnished a White House Packard, but Douglas MacArthur paid for his. When in Des Moines, Presidents and President wannabees were chauffeured (often by my father, see 1940 photo with Wendell Wilkie) in Packards. Even Henry Ford, of all people, was transported to his grave in a Packard! For years, everybody who was anybody announced his worldly success by owning a Packard. This, of course, included the movie stars: Gary Cooper, Clark Gable, Bob Hope, even Wallace Beery and Tom Mix. Most had expensive custom-made bodies.

Packard earned its international prestige in a price range that was crowded with competitors producing quality machines. Peerless and Pierce-Arrow were prime contenders as were Auburn, Cord and Duesenberg until the Depression closed them all down. Cadillac, an upper middle class auto, drew on the resources of General Motors to rival Packard. There were others, but Packard outdistanced them all, if not always in speed and number of cylinders, at least in classic styling, sumptuous comfort, handcrafted precision and meticulous attention to detail.

It is ironic that American automobile companies manufactured some of their greatest vehicles at a time when the economy was at its lowest point. Cadillac began in 1930 with its V-16; Duesenberg brought its super-charged SJ

to market; Cord introduced a new V-8 with an eminently stylish body design. Others followed suit. Packard set out in 1930 to design a luxury car with high performance (but one much quieter than a Duesenberg) and as free from imperfection as the Cadillac Sixteen (but much simpler mechanically), and they strived to create a car that Europeans rated superior to any of the finest old world contemporaries, including Rolls Royce and Mercedes. They achieved it all, especially in Europe, with the Packard Twelve and Super-eight.

The Peverills' introduction to Packard is analogous to a steak lover who only relishes the "center cuts." In 1932, they acquired the Packard franchise, which included 60 Iowa counties (more were added later). The period 1932 through World War II was Packard's greatest years in terms of product and prestige. Packards produced from 1932 to 1934, in the opinion of most collectors, are the best of the best. Some of these sell, if even available, for seven figures. As early as 1946, my own personal view of the automobile was that it no longer commanded its legendary dash of elegance it once had. These points are arguable and in certain circles vigorously.

During the banner year 1928, Packard built 49,698 automobiles and earned nearly \$22 million. In 1932, sales fell over 60% to 16,613, and Packard lost \$6 million. Even then, however, Packard still enjoyed close to 40% of the market for cars costing more than \$2,000, its sales greater than Cadillac, LaSalle, Duesenberg, and Lincoln combined. As the depression years were on, it was clear that Packard, if it were to survive, would have to move into a lower price bracket while, hopefully, not sully the Packard name. Cadillac, Ford and Chrysler could survive on the strength of Chevrolet, Ford and Plymouth. The independent luxury carmaker would have to find new markets or perish.

By 1935, Packard would introduce its One-Twenty, naming the car after its wheelbase (and horse power). Prices started at just \$986 for the business coupe. But the top of the line touring sedan cost only \$1,095. Even before the car was ever built, Packard had taken in \$10 million in cash orders. Actual sales exploded; Packard built 52,045 cars, handily shattering the sales record of 1928. In 1936, Packard brought out the One Ten which was again a tremendous

success; 65,400 were sold and, combined with 50,100 One-Twenties, put Packard in fifth place in overall sales. Success continued for the rest of the decade. Because of these cars, Packard quadrupled its sales and tripled its dealer network, a tremendous success story.

The Packard One-Twenty was a quality automobile. The old guard made sure that the cost cutting did not go too far. It contained some features not even found in the senior series – the Super Eight and Twelve. At times, it was of the very highest quality, albeit at a lower price. There was no better buy for the money. Dutch Darrin who designed the immortal, exotic and beautiful Darrin Packard (see exhibit) preferred the One-Twenty chassis to serve as the basis for his styling. In 1938, I rode to California in a Packard One-Twenty – a great ride all the way.

The Six – the Packard One Ten - was Packard's best selling model. In terms of image, however, and its ultimate effect on the company, it was the company's worst product, taking the company down the road toward mediocrity. It was brought on by managers hired from GM where volume was everything.

Packard might have avoided tarnishing its name if it had selected an alternative brand as Cadillac had done with LaSalle, then discarding it when it fulfilled its "function." But would another name have done as well (A rose by another name ...)? I doubt it. In the final analysis, historians and enthusiasts still blame the One-Twenty and the Six (One Ten) for sullying the grand old marque, forgetting that without them, Packard's demise would have been 20 years sooner.

From 1941, Cadillac would trump Packard in the luxury market. At the end of World War II, the company would compound its image problem with less acceptable design features. For years, indeed forever, Packard's grill and radiator design were (and are) the epitome of the classic car (see, for example, the cover design from the 2003 Salisbury Automobile Classic). Packard drifted away from this prominent feature; moreover, while Packard's focus was limited to the grill, Cadillac's great contribution was to bring product identity to the rear of

the automobile. In this, they were urged into action by wartime P-38 tail fans. Not to mention wartime pinup photos of Betty Grable.

As with the Hudson, I have no memory of Peverill Motor Sales Packard customers with exception, of course, the Weeks family who owned several Packards. Like Hudson, Packard has an international motorcar club with a few thousand members.

You will probably be able to “ask the man who owns one” forever. There are more Packards listed in the Classic Car Club of America directory than any other make. It is America’s most collectible classic.

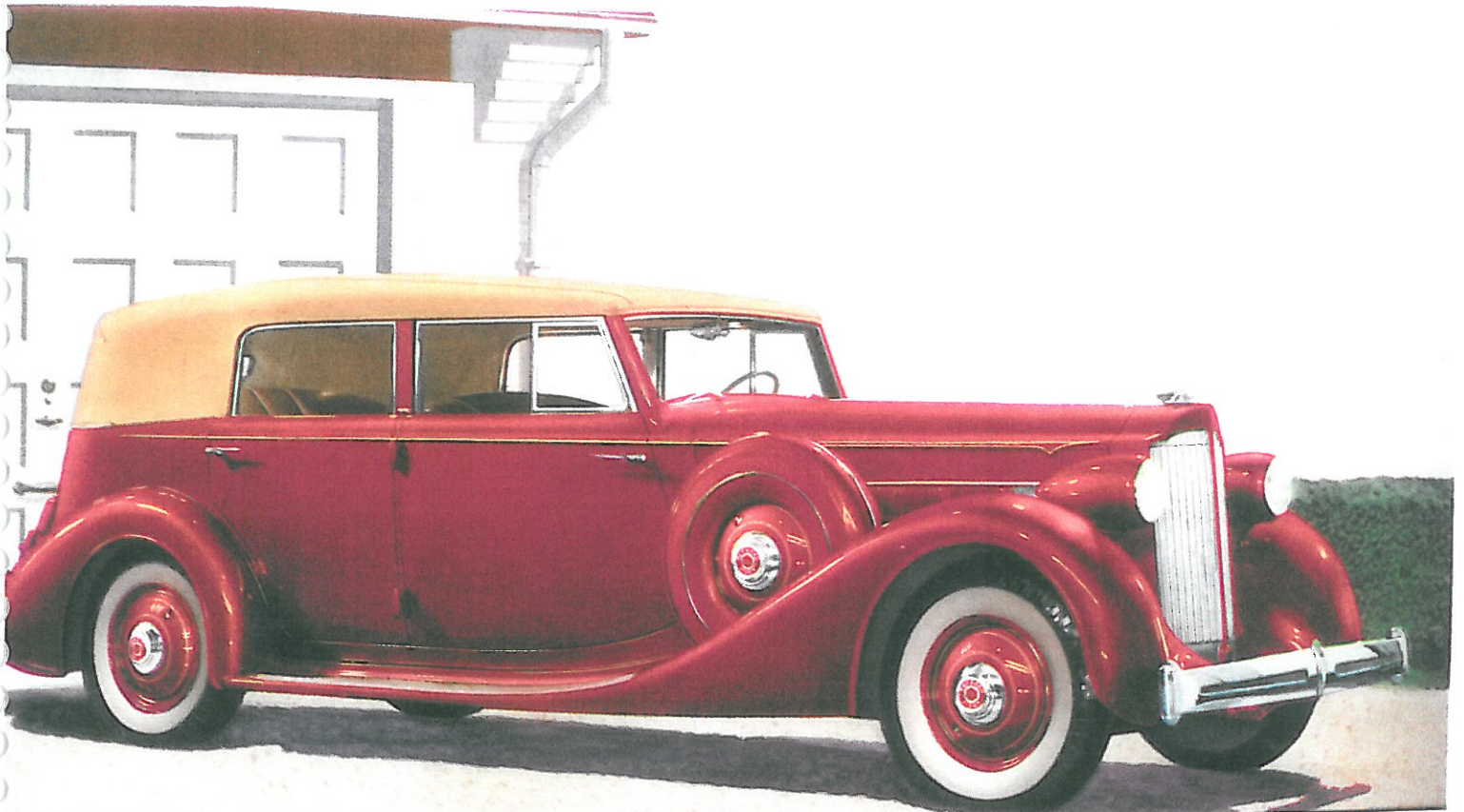
2003 SALISBURY AUTOMOBILE CLASSIC



The Packard Grill Epitomizes The Classic Automobile



MR. D. M. FERRY JR. of *Grosse Pointe*
is one of more than 1000 distinguished owners through whose gateways
Packards have passed for 21 years or more



NO YOU who are considering the purchase of a fine car—and today more people are buying fine cars than at any time in years—this fact is of the utmost importance . . .

. . . more than 1000 distinguished families have owned Packards continuously, year after year, for 21 years or longer.

No other fine car we know of can point to such a record. It is glowing testimonial to the service and satisfaction Packard gives, the prestige it carries.

But perhaps of even greater importance to you is the record new 1935 Packards are creating today.

Since the introduction of these cars, Packard has received a larger percentage of the fine car business—both here and abroad—than ever before in its 36 years of history.

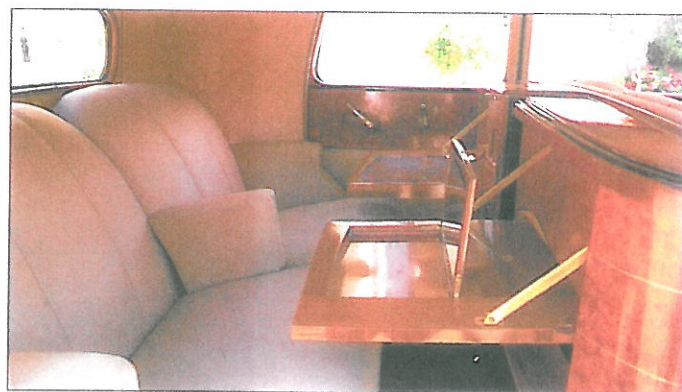
It is easy to learn why. Just telephone your Packard dealer—have him bring one of these magnificent new cars to your home. Ride in it—drive it—compare it. You'll know then why more and more people are calling the 1935 Packard "The finest motor car the world has ever seen!"

PACKARD EIGHT · SUPER EIGHT · TWELVE

+ *Ask the man who owns one* +



At the high end of the Packard scale are cars like this 1934 LeBaron Model 1108 V-12 dual-cowl sport phaeton, the most valuable and luxurious models ever to bear the Packard name.



The Car of the Dome

The most famous single Packard Twelve was, surprisingly, not a convertible, but a four-door sedan. It was the star of the giant dome of the Travel and Transportation Building at the Century of Progress, the Chicago World's Fair, in 1933: a majestic Dietrich style 3182 Formal Sedan, modified to present "The highest expression of the industry that has civilized the world."

Standing next to the spindly 1899 Model A that had started the Packard saga, "the last word in Packards verily cried out unabashed luxury and was guaranteed to cause mouth-watering among the legions of spectators," wrote Morgan Yost in the multi-author *Packard: A History of the Motorcar and the Company*. It "was a delicate blending of ingredients from Dietrich and [Alexis] de Sakhnof-

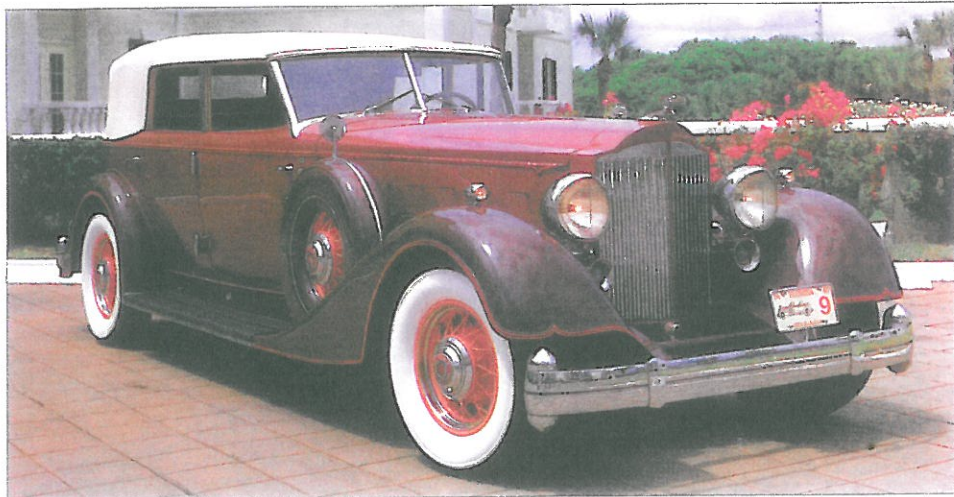
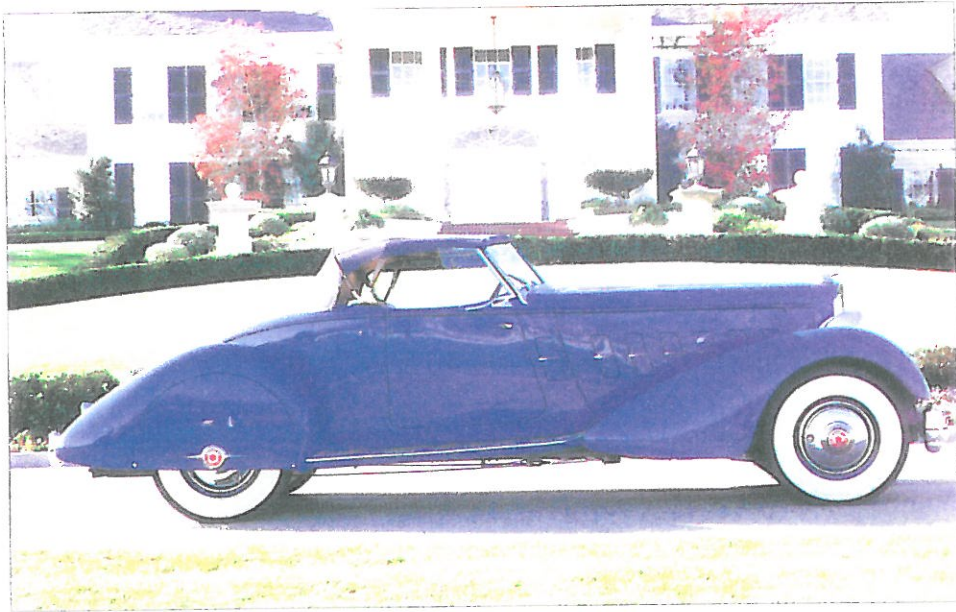
fsky, with dashes of flavor from [chief of design] Edward Macauley and Packard."

The essential shape was that of the Tenth Series Sport Sedan by Dietrich, updated for the Eleventh Series with bumper caps and forward-extended front fenders. The use of a rear-mounted spare obviated sidemounts, revealing the beautifully swept fenders. An elongated "false hood" and slim spears on the hood vent doors added to the impression of length afforded by the 147-inch wheelbase. On the bail-style radiator cap, the bail was replaced by an upright pelican mascot.

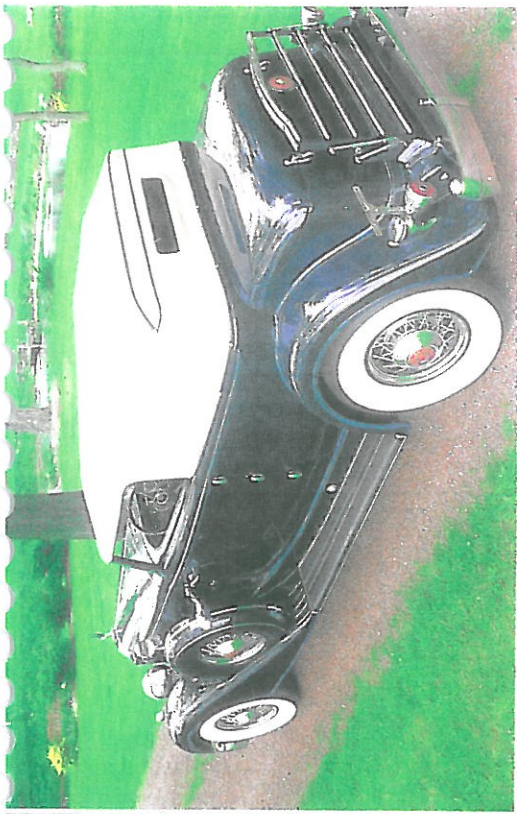
The factory's description, in *MoToR* for October 1933, noted "the costliness of its interior furnishings. All body hardware is heavily gold plated and so are the steering column and instruments. Wood paneling and trim are highly polished burley [sic] Carpathian elm. Built into the back of the front seat is a cabinet extending the full width of the car. The right side is occupied by a full length dressing case

with gold plated fittings. At the left is a cellarette with a drop door which becomes a glass covered table when lowered. Inside are large gold cups in racks and large gold containers for liquid refreshments. Upholstery is especially selected beige broadcloth. The exterior finish is called Sun Glow Pearl, a new finish which is gold, or brown, or pearl, depending on how the light strikes it."

At the Century of Progress, Packard's fabulous Car of the Dome was a worthy answer to Cadillac's V-16 Aerodynamic Coupe, Lincoln's prototype Zephyr (then rear-engined), Duesenberg's "Twenty Grand," and Pierce's "Silver Arrow," and it carried off more prizes than any of these. After the fair, Packard displayed it at its distributors around the country, after which it was used for some years by President Alvan Macauley. It was first purchased by a collector in 1951, and is now part of the fine Otis Chandler collection in California.



Many consider the '34 Twelves to be the handsomest of the decade. The rakish Model 1106 LeBaron Speedster Runabout (*top*) was a singular design built on a special 135-inch wheelbase (shared with the Model 1103 Super Eight). It commanded a princely \$7746! Also extremely desirable, the Model 1108 dual-cowl LeBaron Sport Phaeton (*center*) rode the long 147-inch chassis. It sold for \$7065. (Owner: Fran Roxas) More conventional, but equally striking, the Model 1108 Convertible Sedan by Dietrich (*above*) cost \$6555. (Owner: The Benjamin R. Caskey family)



Because of the body design, it was impossible to hinge the doors at the front, thus the massive Dietrich Custom featured rear-hinged, or as they have become popularly known, "suicide-style" doors.

The 1108 was the crowning jewel of Packard's 1934 12-cylinder model line. As designed and bodied by Dietrich Inc., the cars were all true coachbuilt customs. Nine different body styles were cataloged, including this style 4072, the Custom Dietrich convertible victoria. Priced at \$6,080, only three examples were produced in 1934.



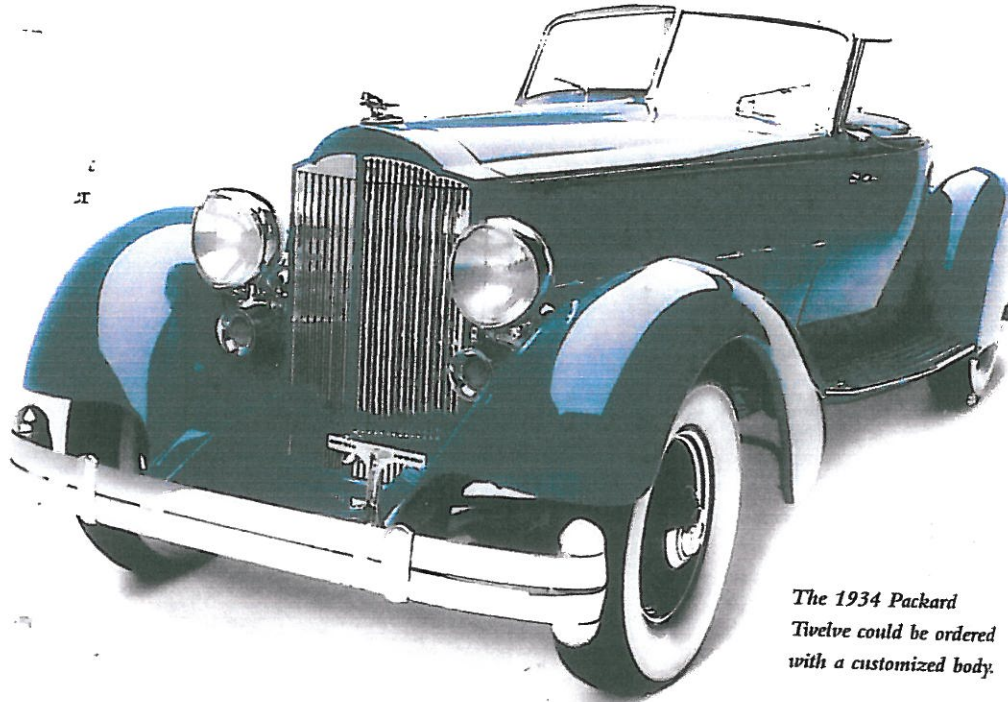


As an independent designer, Dutch Darrin had more influence on the automotive industry than anyone outside of Harley Earl. It wasn't the number of cars Darrin built that made him influential, but the people for whom they were built. Recalled Darrin's partner Rudy Stoessel, "The Hollywood Darrins were real celebrity cars. Clark Gable, Tyrone Power, Dick Powell, Errol Flynn, Chester Morris, Al Jolson, Ruby Keeler, Preston Foster, and Gene Krupa all owned Darrins." Darrin subtly changed just about every detail of the Packard One Twenty and One Eighty models he built. Roughly a dozen victorias, like the car pictured, were built through 1939 on the Packard One-Twenty chassis. Two additional cars were built on Super Eight chassis.

Photographed where it might well have been seen back in 1932, this handsome Packard 903 Deluxe Eight Convertible Sedan is owned today by actor/producer Robert Achor. Achor says that the stylish Packard, designed by Ray Dietrich and built by Murray, has a roll-up divider window for the rear compartment and removable B-pillars to make the Sedan into a fully open convertible. Usually Classic cars were owned by famous stars, but this one is the star. The Packard has appeared in the Disney film Rocketeer, in an episode of "Quantum Leap," and in both of the Addams Family movies.

Insatiable Drive

Collectors swoon over early 20th-century classic cars from Packard, Pierce-Arrow and Peerless.



The 1934 Packard Twelve could be ordered with a customized body.

TOP 10 RECENT AUCTION PRICES FOR PACKARD AND PIERCE-ARROW

- 1934 Packard Twelve 1106 LeBaron Runabout Speedster: \$3.2 million
- 1934 Packard Twelve 1105 Dietrich Convertible: \$1.045 million
- 1934 Packard Twelve Sport Sedan: \$962,500
- 1933 Packard Twelve Dietrich Convertible: \$638,000
- 1917 Pierce-Arrow Model 66 A4 7P Touring: \$412,500
- 1933 Pierce-Arrow Twelve Convertible Sedan: \$374,000
- 1934 Packard 1106 LeBaron Speedster: \$350,000
- 1931 Packard 840 Waterhouse Victoria: \$340,000
- 1929 Packard 645 Dual Cowl: \$280,500
- 1930 Packard 745 Victoria Convertible: \$231,000

SOURCES: RM AUCTIONS, BAILEY-JACKSON AUCTION CO., GOODING & CO., CHESTER'S

Grassrooters Greet Willkie



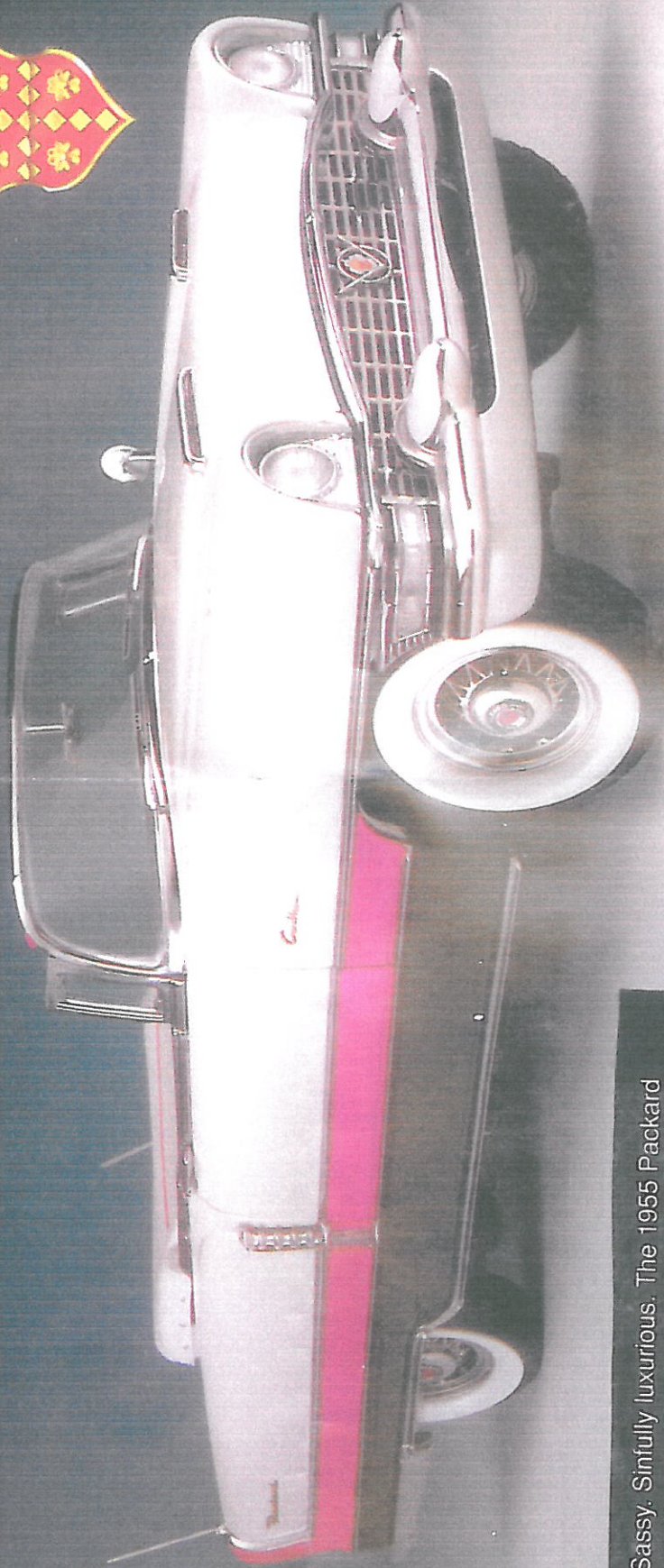
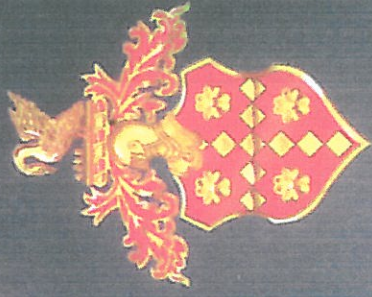
Wendell L. Willkie is shown waving to the crowd that gathered at the Des Moines airport Sunday to welcome him to the

"grassroots" conference here today with farm leaders from 10 states. Mrs. Willkie is with him. —AP Wirephoto.

Harry Peverill At The Wheel of 1940 Packard Four Door Convertible



Randall Klein was a good friend and good customer who bought numerous Hudsons and Packards. He bought this 1934 Packard convertible when another Hudson Jones customer could not pay for it. Randall's politics were not the same as the Peverills. Here he drives Franklin Roosevelt.



Bold. Sassy. Sinfully luxurious. The 1955 Packard Caribbean. Arguably, the most popular American luxury car of its day. And with only 500 ever produced, among the rarest.

But more significantly, this was the car that marked the end of one of the most distinguished marques in automotive history. Yes, the name Packard would endure a few more years, but the '55 Caribbean marked the last of the Detroit-built Packards, and for all practical purposes the grand