



Exhaust Whistle



Great Southern Region AACA

September 2026 - Official publication of the AACA Great Southern Region - Serving Central Alabama

Vol. 38 No.9

Next Outing - Dinner Meeting October 20 - 6pm - Jubilee Joe's in Hoover - Invite a friend!



Before it became Batman's ride, the Lincoln Futura was a futuristic 1955 concept car, a rolling vision of what the automobile of tomorrow might look like. (thehenryford.org)

THE CAR THAT BECAME THE BATMOBILE

The incredible second life of the Lincoln Futura

Imagine being a kid in 1966, sitting in front of the television, waiting for those familiar words: "Same Bat-Time. Same Bat-Channel." Then came the Batmobile.

With its long, sweeping body, enormous fins, bubble-like cockpit and unmistakably futuristic shape, it didn't look like anything else on the road or anything else on television. It looked as

though Batman had driven it straight out of the future.

But here's the part of the story that makes this car so fascinating: It wasn't built to be the Batmobile.

Years before Batman climbed behind its wheel, the car was known as the Lincoln Futura,

Continued on page 3

A Note From The **PRESIDENT**

Fall is officially upon us and there are hints of wonderful driving days ahead of us. I for one am ready to put ridiculously hot weather behind us for a few months.

Speaking of hot weather, our turnout for Pepper Place was disappointing since only 4 cars showed up and 1 wasn't from our club. The heat was clearly part of the problem and there were other car shows going on that same day. So, Pepper Place has been gracious to us and allowing a redo. That date is set for November 21st and hopefully we can redeem ourselves and have a good turnout. Please mark it on your calendar now and plan to join us.

Also, the date has been set for our Christmas party. This year, Eddie and Suzanne Bibb have been gracious to host this year's event and because that time of year is exceptionally busy on weekends, the luncheon will be on Thursday, December 10th, and will be at their historical home in Forest Park. The address is 4348 10th Avenue South in Birmingham. Start time TBA. Once again, please mark your calendar now and plan to attend this wonderful event.

Also, for those who wish to participate, several members have noted interest in being a part of the Helena Christmas Parade. It will be held on December 5th between 2 and 4 PM. Please join us if you can.

If you have any questions on any event, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Ken McClellan



Great Southern Region AACA
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AACA National Headquarters
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Founded 1935 717.534.1910
www.aaca.org

**Dedicated to the preservation,
restoration and maintenance of
automobiles and automotive history**

Membership in the AACA is required to be a
member of the Great Southern Region
Ownership of an antique car is optional

Exhaust Whistle

Great Southern Region, Birmingham, AL

Email stories and photos to Charlotte at
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facebook: gsraaca

The Exhaust Whistle is a monthly publication of the AACA Great Southern Region, view expressed in the Exhaust Whistle are not necessarily those of the Region officers of AACA. Original material may be reprinted if credit is given.

2026 Officers

President: Ken McClellan

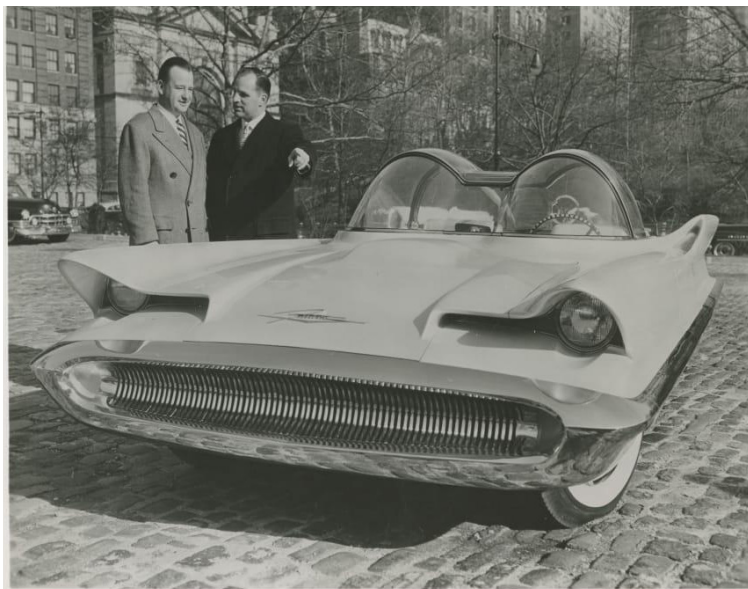
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Editor/Webmaster: Charlotte Dahlenburg





1955: The Lincoln Futura arrives from an era when America's fascination with jets, rockets and the future was influencing automobile design. (<https://cine21.com/>)

a spectacular concept car created in the optimistic days of 1950s America. Built by Ghia in Turin, Italy, the Futura was everything the Space Age promised automobiles might someday become: dramatic fins, futuristic styling, transparent canopies and headlight pods that looked more like something from a rocket ship than a Lincoln.

America was fascinated with the future. Rockets were heading skyward, jet aircraft were transforming travel, and the Space Race was capturing the imagination of the public. Detroit designers



The details that made the Futura look like it came from another planet later helped make it the perfect Batmobile. (Peterson Museum)

responded by making cars that looked ready for liftoff. Fins became bigger, windshields became more dramatic and designers began borrowing shapes and ideas from aviation and space exploration. The Futura was one of those dream machines. It appeared in the 1959 movie *It Started with a Kiss*, but its most famous chapter was still years away.

By the time the 1960s arrived, the futuristic concept car had become something of a forgotten relic. Then along came custom car legend George Barris.

When the new Batman television series needed a Batmobile, Barris saw something others might have overlooked. The Futura already had the exaggerated shape, fins and futuristic personality that Batman needed. With some creative reworking, paint and custom touches, the old dream car was transformed



Batman and Robin—and one of television's most famous automobiles. When the series debuted in 1966, the Futura found its second life. (1966batmobile.com)

into something entirely new.

And suddenly, a concept car from the 1950s was one of the most famous cars in America. The Lincoln Futura became the Batmobile. When Adam West and Burt Ward appeared on television as Batman and Robin in 1966, the Batmobile became almost a character itself. The show ran for three seasons and 120 episodes, and its colorful, tongue-in-cheek style turned Batman into a television sensation.

For a generation of kids, the Batmobile wasn't just a car. It was the car. It represented everything a kid imagined a car could be: fast, mysterious, loaded



Custom-car legend George Barris saw the potential in the futuristic Futura and turned it into the Batmobile in time for television's Caped Crusader. (wjla.com)

with gadgets and unlike anything their parents were driving.

And that's part of what makes the Futura such a wonderful piece of automotive history. It began as a manufacturer's vision of tomorrow, spent some time nearly forgotten, and then found a second life as a

piece of pop-culture history.

The story also says something about the automobiles of the 1950s and '60s. Designers weren't simply building cars to get people from one place to another. They were selling a vision of the future.

The Futura may have been too wild for the showroom, but it turned out to be almost perfect for Gotham City.

Today, when we look at that outrageous car, we can see both versions of it: the futuristic Lincoln that came out of an era fascinated by rockets and jets and the Batmobile that sent an entire generation of kids racing to the television every week.

The car was designed to show people what the future might look like. Instead, it became a memory.

And for those of us who grew up with Batman, the Futura will probably always be remembered for the moment when that strange, wonderful car came roaring onto the screen and Batman and Robin headed off to save Gotham. Holy automotive history!

Sources & Further Reading:

Lincoln/Ford Motor Company; Barris Kustom LLC; Smithsonian Institution, National Museum of American History; American Film Institute; Turner Classic Movies.

Free • Open Car Show • All Makes All Models

GREAT SOUTHERN REGION CAR SHOW



MARTIN BISCUIT - JENI'S PARKING LOT
2930 3rd Ave S, Birmingham

**FREE TO ENTER
& ATTEND**

**SATURDAY
NOVEMBER 21, 2026
8:00 AM - 12:00 PM**



A monthly publication of the Great Southern Region - AACA

September 2026



A Note From The **EDITOR**

October is finally here, and I think most of us are ready for it. The summer heat is starting to let up, the weather is getting better for driving, and our cars are ready to get back out on the road.

The first part of October brings one of the biggest events on the AACA calendar, the Eastern Division National Fall Meet in Hershey. If you have ever been to Hershey, you know there is really nothing quite like it. Whether you are showing a car, looking for that one hard-to-find part, walking the flea market, or just catching up with friends, there is something around every corner. For those of us who can't make the trip this year, there are still plenty of things happening closer to home.

One thing I would like to see more of this time of year is our club getting involved in local Trunk or Treat events. These events are a great excuse to get our old cars out and, more importantly, give kids a chance to see them up close.

For many children, an antique car is something they have only seen in a picture or at a car show.

Letting them sit in the driver's seat, look under the hood, or ask questions can make a real impression. You never know when that little boy or girl standing beside your car might become the next generation of car collectors, restorers, or AACA members.

We spend a lot of time talking about preserving our automotive history. I think sharing it with young people is a big part of that. So if you see a Trunk or Treat or community Halloween event looking for cars, take yours along. Pass out some candy, talk to the kids, and let them enjoy the cars.

Don't forget to invite the parents to our dinner meetings. A personal invite will go a long way toward building a friendship that could turn into another old car hobbyist and active member of our club.

And, of course, don't forget to enjoy October yourself. Take the car out for a drive, go to a show, meet up with another club, or just find a good back road and enjoy the cooler weather.

After all, the best way to preserve these old cars is to keep them out where people can see them.

Charlotte

GSR Calendar

January 22	Dinner Meeting
February 26	Dinner Meeting
March 26	Dinner Meeting
April 23	Drive Tour
May 18	Drive Tour
June 16	Dinner Meeting
July 21.....	Dinner Meeting
August 18	Dinner Meeting
September 15	Dinner Meeting
October 20	Dinner Meeting
November 17.....	Dinner Meeting
December 10	Christmas Gathering



The Military Sponsorship Program is available to all of the Military Veterans that have proudly served to protect our homeland and freedoms.

With this program, AACA is extending a limited number of complimentary 2023 memberships for first-time AACA applicants. More information on this program and an application can be found on the AACA website under member information and drop down to Military. These complimentary 2023 memberships are for first-



time AACA applicants and are limited by the funds available for this program. These complimentary applications for membership are intended for individuals who have a genuine interest in the antique car hobby.



Local Calendar

Cruise Ins

- 1st & 3rd Tuesday - 5-8pm** Petro Bucksville 22526 Highway 216 McCalla
- Thursday Weekly - 6-9pm** VFW Post 6022, 7001 University Blvd E, Cottondale
- 1st Friday - 6-8 pm** Sonic, 1713 2nd Ave SW, Cullman, AL. (Mar - Oct)
- 1st Saturday - 8-11am** Hoovers Tactical Firearms Cruise In 1561 Montgomery Hwy. Hoover. Hosted by Dixie Vintage Antique Automobile Club
- 1st Saturday - 9-12 pm** MOB Inc Monthly Car Show 40 Inverness Pkwy, Hoover
- 1st Saturday - 9-2pm** Cruising on the Square. Downtown Jasper (Apr-Sept)
- 1st Saturday - 8:30-11:30.** Warrior Tire 30 Lester Doss Rd, Warrior
- 2nd Friday - 5:30-9pm** Christian Street Rodders 8512 21st St Haleyville in the City Hall Lower Parking lot
- 2nd Saturday - 5-8pm** Apr-Oct Bee Line Highway Classics & Cruisers Railroad St, Hartselle
- 2nd Saturday - 6-9pm** Apr-Oct Alabama Misfits Jack's Exit 267 off I-65 1195 Walker Chapel Rd, Flutondale
- 2nd Saturday - 8-11am** - Magic City Octane. 6200 Grand River Blvd E, Leeds, AL
- 3rd Saturday - 6pm** Tallahassee Shopping Center 400 Gilmer Ave
- 3rd Saturday - 2-5pm** Hooters Hwy 119 & Oak Mountain Park Road, Pelham
- 3rd Saturday - 3:30-8:30pm** Home Depot 41310 US Hwy 280 Sylacauga
- 3rd Saturday - 4:30-7:30pm** Home Depot 3784 US 431 Phoenix City
- 3rd Saturday - 6-9pm** Jack's Drive in Blountsville (May-Aug)
- 4th Friday 5-8pm** Downtown Leeds (Apr - Oct)
- 4th Saturday - 5-9pm** Pizza Bar 141 2nd St NW Carbon Hill
- 4th Saturday - 8-10:30am** 1110 Sparkman St. NW Hartselle American Legion Post 52
- Saturday Weekly 8:30-10:30** Shops of Colonnade 3418 Colonnade Pkwy, Birmingham
- 3rd Sunday - 1-5pm** Casual Pint, 5541 Grove Blvd, Hoover
- 3rd & 5th Sunday 3pm** 1204 Forestdale Square, Forestdale
- Last Saturday - 5pm-?** 7900 Vaughn Rd at Taylor Rd Montgomery

Shows

October

- 2-4 Godfather Streetrods Swap Meet & Car Corral.** 8-5pm. Tannehill State Park, McCalla, AL Classic cars and motorcycles. Info 205-908-6324
- 3 Jayden Day 2026 Car Show.** 9-2pm Hayden Town Hall. Registration \$10. Info 205-913-8932
- 3 Jeepin for a Cure - Alabama Car Show.** 12-4pm. McSweeney Auto Sales, Clanton, AL. All vehicles welcome
- 3 Central High School of Clay County Car Show.** 8-2pm. 1 Bob Riley Drive Lineville, AK \$20 Reg. 50/50, Food Truck.
- 10 Montevallo Charity Car Show.** 11-2pm. Orr Park

Montevallo, AL. All Vehicles. \$25 Donation.

- 10 Anita's Car Show 2026.** 8-1pm. 86635 Hwy 9 Lineville, AL. \$20 Reg. Info 256-252-9389
- 10 Hot Rods & Harley Museum Car Show.** Exit 299 on I-65, 5070 CO. Rd. 490, Hanceville. 10-4pm. Reg on line \$20, Onsite \$30.
- 11 Lodge 189 Elktoberfest Car Show.** 1-5pm. 1019 S Noble Street, Anniston, AL. Live Band, Food & Bev Available. Info: 256-591-1376
- 17 Ronald Griffith Memorial Car & Truck Show.** 8-1pm. Cross Creek Community Church 4825 US Hwy 278 E, Hokes Bluff. Info at 256-613-0096
- 17 Rev Your Engines.** 9-2pm. St Clair Arena & Event Center. Info: Odenvillechamber.com/car-show
- 24 40th Annual Blountsville Harvest Festival Car Show.** 8-2pm. Jacks Drive-In Blountsville. \$20 entry. Door prizes, 50/50, Money Tree. Info 205-625-8506
- 23-24 7th Annual Wyatt Spann Memorial Car Show.** Friday 5-10pm Live Music. Sat. 9-2pm 3928 Byler Rd. Eldridge Reg. \$20. Info 205-412-5877
- 30 Cruise in Trunk or Treat at the Nauvoo Train Depot** 5-8pm Free hot dogs. Hosted by Nauvoo Historical Society
- November**
- 14 Oasis of White Plains 3rd Annual Classic Car Show & Arts & Craft Festival.** 9-2pm. 23153 US Hwy 431 Lafayette. Reg \$20. Info 334-757-0170
- 14 40th Annual Ho! Ho! Ho! Christmas Show.** 9-2pm. 402 Arnold St NE, Cullman. \$20 Entry or toy with a \$20 or more value. Info 256-200-4548
- 21 Great Southern Region Car Show.** 8-12pm. 2930 3rd Ave S, Birmingham. Free to enter & Attend

AACA Calendar

October 6-9

Eastern Fall Nationals

Location: Hershey, PA Host: Hershey Region 2027

February 4-6

Annual Convention/National Awards

Location: King of Prussia, PA Host: AACA

February 18-20

Winter Nationals

Location: Melbourne, FL

April 8-10

Annual Grand Nationals/Zenith/Southeastern Spring Nationals

Location: Charlotte, NC

June 3-5

Eastern Spring Nationals

Location: Fredericksburg, VA





while sharing as much existing company hardware as possible. The result was the Coronet-based Charger. The exterior styling was, in general, a departure from Dodge's mainstream cars. Introduced in mid-1966, the Charger would compete with the Rambler Marlin, Ford Mustang, and Plymouth Barracuda.

The 1965 Dodge Charger II Concept created the desired fastback look shared much existing company hardware.

The interior design of the Charger was different from all other cars, according to the Wiki page. It debuted a full-length center console and "all bucket seating" front and rear. Also an innovation, the rear

pseudo-buckets could be folded to create more cargo space through the enormous rear hatch.

The Hemi Halo

The Charger wasn't intended to compete head-to-head in performance with pony cars but was available with Chrysler's famed 426 Hemi V8.

On Jan. 1, 1966, The 1966 Charger had its big public debut at the Rose Bowl as the new "Leader of the Dodge Rebellion." The Charger's debut was also followed midyear by a new street version of the 426 cubic-inch, 7.0-liter Chrysler Hemi engine.

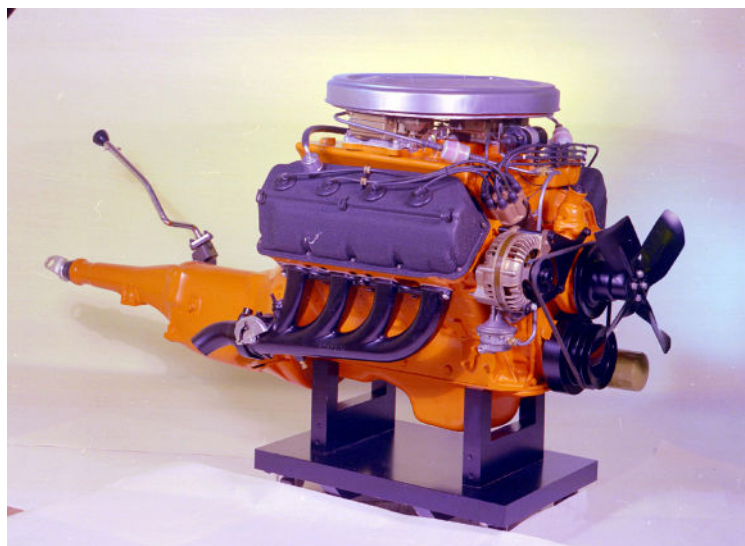
The Charger wasn't intended to compete head-to-head in performance with pony cars but was available with Chrysler's famed 426 Hemi V8.

With the Charger, Dodge had a new model to build a performance image with this engine.

The Charger was designed by Carl "CAM" Cameron and introduced a fastback roofline and pot-metal "electric shaver" grille. Its fully rotating headlights were a feature not seen on a Chrysler product since the 1942 DeSoto. The fastback design ended over a full-width six-lamp taillight in the rear with chromed and wide-spaced "C H A R G E R" lettering.

Dodge Charger Powertrains

According to the Wiki report, Charger powertrains for 1966 consisted of V-8s with three choices of transmission.





CHRYSLER CORPORATION'S 1966 HEMI-426 ENGINE

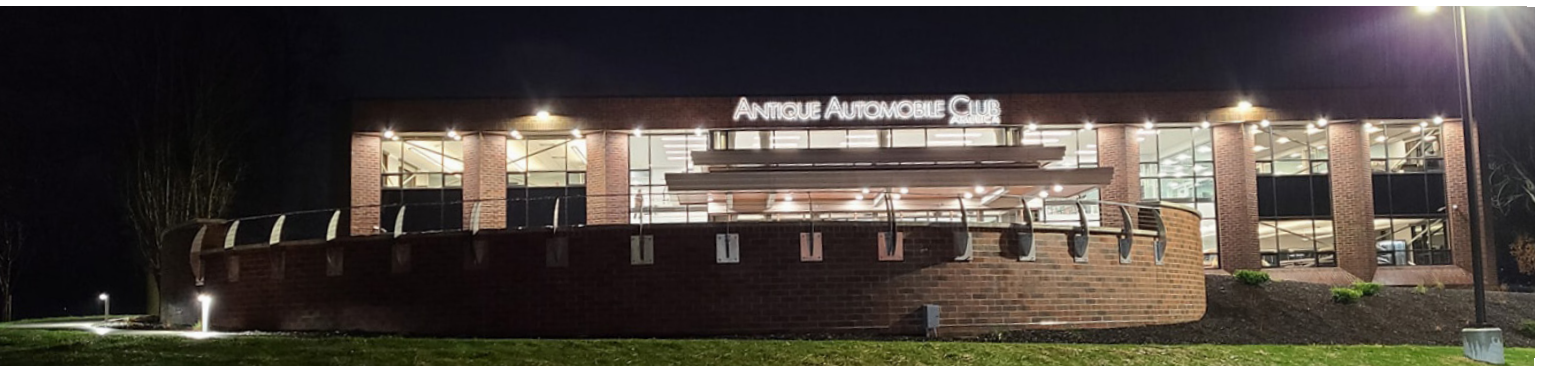
Four engines were offered:

- 318 cubic-inch 5.2-liter with a two-barrel carburetor for the base-model Charger;
- 361-cubic-inch, 5.9-liter two-barrel;
- 383 cubic-inch, 6.3-liter with a four-barrel carburetor;
- And the new 426 Street Hemi. Only 468 Chargers were built with the 426.

The transmissions for the 1966 Charger:

- Three-speed steering-column mounted manual with the base engine,
- Console-mounted four-speed manual;
- Three-speed automatic.

Total 196 Dodge Charger production came to 37,344 units for the mid-model year introduction.



How can you support AACA?

**Send a gift to the
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**For information
on how to donate,
just call AACA National HQ
at 717-534-1910.**



Speedster articles courtesy of AACA

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

2027 AACA Membership Renewals Start Soon

By Karen White, AACA Membership Manager, kwhite@aacaa.org



As most of you know, your AACA membership runs for a calendar year – January 1 through December 31.

Beginning September 1, you can start using our super easy online membership renewal. Renewing online is quick and simple! Just log in with your membership number and PIN number, review the information currently listed on your membership record and make changes if necessary. Payment options include Visa, MasterCard and Discover. Your payment will automatically record to your membership record, and you will receive a confirmation email receipt.

Your membership number and PIN number can be found on your membership card. If you don't know your membership number and/or PIN number, you can email membership@aacaa.org or call AACA National Headquarters at 717-534-1910. Please DON'T try to pay your dues by using the JOIN AACA tab. This WILL NOT renew your membership – instead, it will create a new one.

If you're going to be at Hershey, you can also stop by the AACA trailer or tents and renew your membership in person with us.

We look forward to seeing or hearing from all of you very soon!

membership@aacaa.org.





A 1963 McDonald's sign from Huntsville, Alabama on display at the American Sign Museum in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Liquid Fire: Why Classic Cars and Neon Lights Belong Together

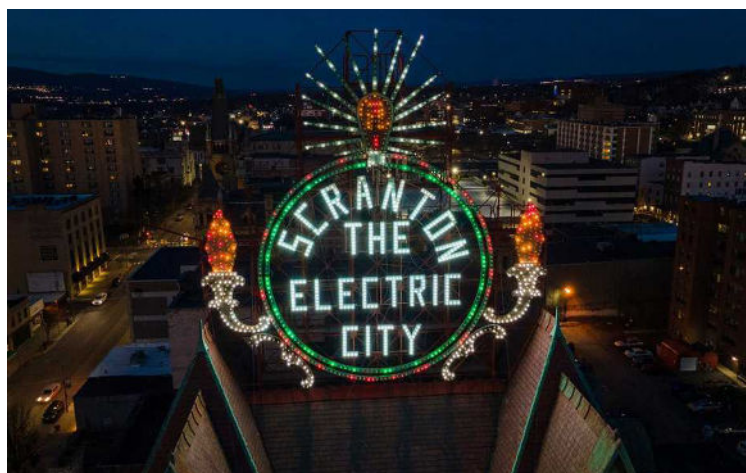
If you've ever taken your ride out for a cruise just as the sun is going down, you know that exact moment when the road changes. The shadows stretch out, the dashboard lights click on, and off in the distance, a vintage neon sign hums to life.

For most of us in the car community, horsepower and neon just belong together. They are two sides of the same coin. But the story of how they teamed up to create American car culture is a wild ride that starts with a French scientist, a luxury car dealer, and a crowd of people who thought they were seeing magic.

The \$2,500 bet that stopped traffic. The whole thing started back in 1910 when a French inventor named Georges Claude figured out that trapping gas in a glass tube and hitting it with electricity made it glow.

A few years later, a sharp California businessman named Earle C. Anthony saw these glowing tubes

while visiting Paris. Anthony sold Packard motor cars, the ultimate American luxury rides at the time, and he knew this crazy new lighting was exactly what



The "Scranton the Electric City" sign on the Scranton Electric Building overlooking Courthouse Square in Scranton, Pennsylvania.. AP Photo/Ted Shaffrey



A picture of the colorful neon sign at Boneyard Park in Las Vegas. Bruno Coelho/Shutterstock

he needed to put his dealership on the map.

In 1923, he paid a whopping \$1,250 each for two custom signs that spelled out “Packard” and shipped them to Los Angeles.

When he finally flipped the switch, the town went nuts. People had never seen a light that pure or bright before. The blue-and-red glow literally stopped traffic on the strip. Local newspapers called it “liquid fire,” and crowds packed the sidewalks just to stand there and stare at it.

Anthony’s little marketing stunt started a massive chain reaction. By the 1930s and 40s, Americans were finally hitting the open road in droves. Families were exploring the country, and businesses realized they had only a few seconds to catch the eye of a driver cruising past at 40 miles per hour.

Neon became the ultimate roadside salesman. Gas stations, diners, motels, and dealerships started competing to see who could build the biggest, loudest, most creative signs. If you were driving down Route

66 in the pitch black, a glowing neon sign wasn’t just advertising it was an oasis promising a hot meal, a warm bed, or a full tank of gas.

By the 1950s, the artists bending the neon glass were taking their cues directly from Detroit. The signs started matching the cars parking underneath them, complete with massive tailfins, speeding arrows, and sharp, futuristic angles

Of course, things changed. By the late 1970s, boring interstate highways bypassed the old scenic routes, and businesses traded beautiful, handmade neon for cheap, plastic, mass-produced box signs. A lot of incredible history ended up smashed in dumpsters or left to rust in scrap yards.

But you can’t keep a classic down. Just like guys in our club rescue rusted muscle cars from barns and bring them back to life, a dedicated group of collectors has spent decades hunting down and restoring vintage neon.

Today, walking into a great garage or an automotive museum feels like stepping into a time machine. There is nothing quite like the soft hum of an authentic neon sign reflecting off a flawless, freshly waxed paint job.

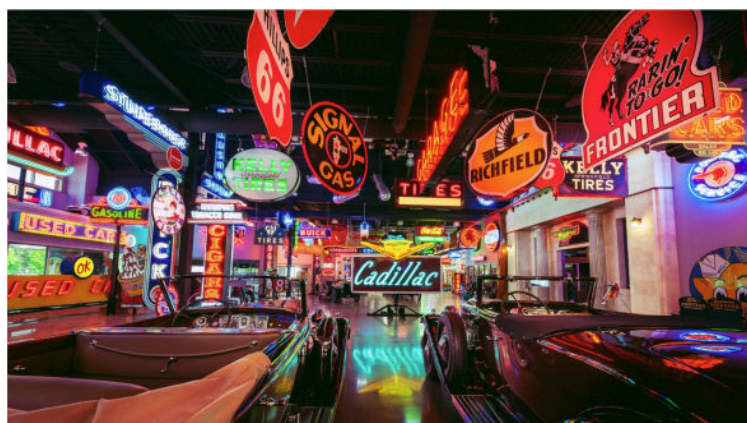
So, the next time you’re out on a night cruise, take a look around. Think back to that Los Angeles Packard dealership in 1923, where a couple of glowing glass tubes changed the American night forever. Neon didn’t just light up the side of the road it gave our car culture its soul. - Charlotte

Sources:

National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), “Luminous Script Signs: The Origins of the ‘Neon Sign’”

Smithsonian Institution, “The People’s Highway: Route 66”

Smithsonian Magazine, articles on Route 66, roadside motels and neon signage



GREAT SOUTHERN REGION - ANTIQUE AUTOMOBILE CLUB OF AMERICA

Application for Membership

Applicant Name_____

Spouse/Partner Name_____

Street Address_____

Telephone Number_____

EMAIL Address_____

Current or past AACA membership Number_____

Current antique cars owned_____

Applicant's Signature_____

Membership and Dues

Great Southern Region members will receive the monthly newsletter, club news and invitations via email

Please check out the website: GreatSouthern.aaca.com

Note: Region members must also be members of AACA. If new to AACA, please complete separate AACA application.

Send both applications and one check for all dues, payable to Great Southern Region AACA to:
Vicki Bolton, Secretary/Treasurer
2056 Shebia Dr
Hoover AL 35216

Annual Dues for Great Southern Region 20.00 per family

Annual Dues for AACA 45.00

