

Come On Down To Florida

By Bob Amos

I just received the November issue of the *Chesapeake Bulletin* and it was very welcomed, but it sort of makes me homesick. Belonging to the Chesapeake Region for 30 years has given me a great and satisfying hobby. However, my participation in the region's activities in Maryland ended with our move to Florida.

I read about the car shows held during the Club's 50th Anniversary and I really wanted to attend some or all of them. I would have enjoyed the picnic at Sterling Walsh's on June 18th. Sterling and Gladys have such a beautiful place with all the magnificent cars and shop building, really almost a museum.

I was also pleased to read about the Club's members showing their cars at the Flower Mart at Mt. Vernon on May 18th. This was a new show for the Club, but a traditional spring event for Baltimore. Those beautiful antique cars are a natural fit with the spring flowers in historic Mt. Vernon. It looked and sounded like a lot of fun.

However, there is an active antique car hobby on the west coast of Florida. And car events are scheduled for all seasons in the Tampa area. I attended two car shows locally, one at the Tampa Bay Automobile Museum in Pinellas Park and the other in Lakeland.

The Tampa Bay Automobile Museum opened in



1770 Fardier de Cugnot at the Tampa Bay Museum

March 2005 and is a private venture with 34 current cars on display. The focus of the museum is European antique cars and the development of automotive technology on the continent. There are some unusual nameplates like Tatra, Amilcar, Gregoire, Tracta, and Aero; and some familiar names like Peugeot, Delahaye, Talbot, Citroen, Mercedes, Allard, and Triumph. The museum has two U.S. cars – a 1929 Willys Knight and a 1930 Ruxton.

The most unusual vehicle at the museum is a replica of the steam powered 1770 Fardier de Cugnot from France, which the French claim is the first self-propelled vehicle. The original is in France and this replica was created in the 1930s, which makes it an antique also. The steam boiler is immense and I wonder how many horses it took to move it when the boiler was not functioning.

The Lake Mirror Classic in Lakeland, held Oct 14th to 16th, was in a beautiful little town surrounded by at least five lakes. The show consisted of two classes of cars, one a Concours d'Elegance parked around Lake Mirror. The other cars were parked on the streets in town. There were approximately 500 cars displayed.

We also went to the Fall Zephyrhills on Nov. 12th. This was a big flea market that caters to all kinds of cars and has a lot of special events.

Dottie and I love it here. We have a roomy penthouse unit in a retirement village with a great view of a lake and part of the University of South Florida campus. We would love to see old friends from the Chesapeake Region. Come on down and join us for a car show.

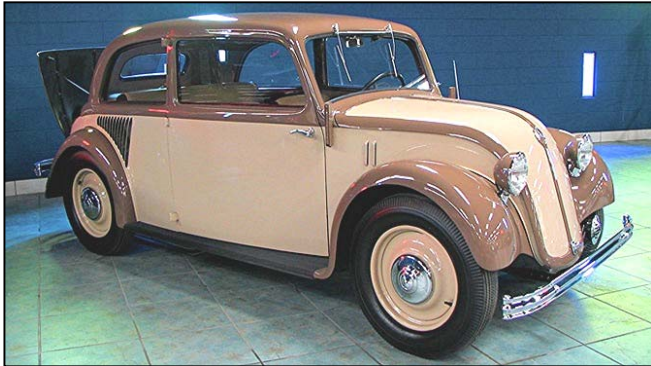
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At the Lakeland show, concours cars lined the lakeshore

Come on down to Florida – continued

These two cars are part of the unique collection at the Tampa Bay Automobile Museum



<< Mercedes Benz 130H, produced in 1934 & 1935.

Like many other far-sighted European manufacturers, Mercedes and Daimler-Benz focused on the concept of a “people’s car” during the years after World War I. Designer Hans Nibel’s 130H was presented at the 1934 Berlin Auto Show. It featured a rear-mounted, water-cooled 1.3 liter engine. Though the engine was small, it created an oversteer condition. It was not a commercial success, but its ideas evolved into other cars, such as the VW Beetle, of which thirty prototypes were built in 1937.

Ruxton, produced in 1929 & 1930 >>

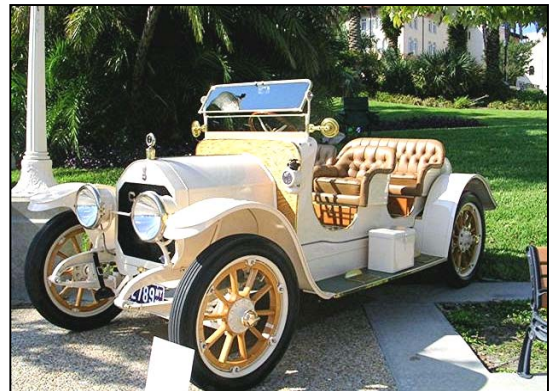
Legendary among classic American cars, only about 200 Ruxtons were produced. The first U.S. front wheel drive car was designed by William J. Muller, an engineer for the Budd Corporation, famous for the manufacturing of welded, pressed steel bodies for automobiles, railway cars and aircraft. The museum’s car was an auto show prototype with a multi-colored mahogany paint scheme.



Some of the cars at the Lake Mirror Classic in Lakeland



Amphicars are into the water showing what they do best



1913 Case Touring Car



Sampling of the many racing and sport cars on display