

## **“Cool Classics”**

### **Antique Car Museum Opening in Alaska**

**March 2009, by Nancy DeWitt, Historian, Fountainhead Antique Auto Museum**

The new Fountainhead Antique Auto Museum in Fairbanks, Alaska will open its doors on June 1, 2009. The museum's collection features over 60 historically significant American automobiles and showcases the interesting heritage of the automobile during Alaska's post-Gold Rush era. The collection include rare gems like a 1901 Rochester, 1904 Stevens-Duryea, 1917 Owen-Magnetic, 1921 Heine-Velox, 1933 Auburn V-12 dual ratio custom speedster and 1938 Elto Midget. Several of the autos are the only examples of their marques known to remain, including an 1898 Hay Hotchkiss, 1906 Compound, and 1920 Argonne. Seventeen of the cars previously resided in the William Harrah and Parker Wickham collections.

While a few of the cars are in original, unrestored condition, many look like they just rolled off the showroom floor. And roll they do! According to Willy Vinton, museum manager, “Our goal is to maintain all of our cars in running condition, and visitors will be able to view repair projects taking place in the museum's shop.” On most summer evenings, docents will drive one or two of the cars around Wedgewood Resort. “To be able to see these rare cars is great,” says Vinton, “but to hear them run and see them operate is priceless.”

The huge photos hanging on the museum walls will alone be worth a visit. More than 70 historic photographs depicting the first automobiles to reach Alaska and its mining camps will be on display, including ones taken in Valdez during the famed 1908 New York to Paris Race. Visitors can also view the museum's vintage fashion collection, featuring clothing from the late Victorian through Early Swing eras. Other exhibits include collections of radiators, engines, spark plugs, and hubcaps.

The Fountainhead Antique Auto Museum is located on the grounds of Wedgewood Resort, just minutes from downtown Fairbanks. An on-site hotel and suites, seasonal restaurant, meeting facilities, banquet services and adjacent wildlife sanctuary make this new museum a perfect destination for car aficionados who venture to the Last Frontier.

For more information, museum hours and a partial list of cars, visit <http://www.fountainheadhotels.com>, call 907-450-2100 or e-mail [museum@fdifairbanks.com](mailto:museum@fdifairbanks.com).