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Fairbanks | Fountainhead Antique Auto Museum

Tuesday, July 6, 2010 at 4:43pm

You can find antique cars, vintage clothing, and unique Alaska history exhibits under one roof in the Golden Heart city of Fairbanks. This fascinating collection has something for everyone – including those who are not auto enthusiasts. To be honest, that description fits me to a Model T. I admit that I was more than a bit dubious before my first visit. I was pleasantly surprised, and found that I spent hours walking through the museum's fascinating exhibits without realizing the passage of time.

Fountainhead Museum is geared with an Alaskan twist, so the foundation of the museum's vast collection includes four vehicles that are original to the Last Frontier. The very first Alaskan automobile is on display, along with other Alaskan cars and vehicles used by the early pioneers. Augmenting the displays are photographs and archival movies showing how autos were modified to fit Alaska's rugged terrain, allowing travel over snow and even along the railway.

The museum's full collection includes over 70 American autos spanning nearly 4 decades. Each carefully restored vehicle illustrates important developments in automotive history between 1899 to 1938. I was surprised to learn that steam, electric, and even hybrid cars were manufactured in the early part of the 20th century. Many of the vehicles on display are one-of-a-kind cars or are sole-survivors of their automotive lineage.

A lovely collection of vintage apparel has been carefully arranged to go hand in hand with the auto displays. Edwardian walking suits and silk bustle gowns from the late Victorian era are paired with corresponding vehicles, evoking a sense of time and place. My favorite pieces are from a slightly later time, the age of flappers and the early swing years. Beaded dresses and lace highlight the changes in fashion over time. It's fascinating to see how the evolution of auto design and clothing fashion tend to mirror one another.

1912 Everitt Photo Car – Kids love to play dress-up and mug for the camera!

Families with children will love the Alaska Gallery exhibit. It contains a replica of the "Sourdough Roadhouse" along the historic Fairbanks-Valdez Trail. A large selection of men's and women's period clothing is available – and playing dress-up is encouraged. Don't leave the museum without decking the kids out in period attire, letting them climb into the antique car, and capturing a perfect Kodak moment.

- 1906 Compound Model 7 1/2 Light Touring
- 1933 Hupmobile Silver Anniversary Series K-321 Victoria
- 1927 Stutz Blackhawk Vertical Eight Custom Series Black Hawk Boattail Speedster
- 1899 Hertel Runabout

SUMMER HOURS

Sunday - Thursday 11 am to 10 pm

Friday - Saturday 11 am to 6 pm

WINTER HOURS

Begin mid September 2010

Open only on Sunday - Noon to 6 pm

Admission

\$8 Ages 13 and above

\$5 Ages 3 - 12

Free - 2 and under

\$4 Guests of Fountainhead Hotels

<http://www.fountainheadhot>

[els.com/auto/](http://www.fountainheadhot.com/auto/)