

# Cool Classics in the Far North

By Nancy DeWitt

Each time the *CCCA Bulletin* or *The Classic Car* arrives in the mail I page through the photos of tours and meets with envy. Living in Alaska has a lot of advantages but being within reasonable driving distance of a CCCA gathering isn't one of them! Still, we manage to enjoy our Classics during our brief but beautiful summers and occasionally get one out for a short winter drive.

I work for the Fountainhead Antique Auto Museum in Fairbanks, a most unlikely place to find a high-class collection of pre-war cars. The museum was the dream of entrepreneur Tim Cerny, president of Fountainhead Development and a long-time aficionado of vintage automobiles. Following the purchase of land adjacent to one of his company's four hotels in 2006, Cerny drew up plans for a 30,000-square-foot museum and began to build his collection.

Cerny's vision was to acquire American-made cars that exemplified some of the most significant or unusual developments in automotive technology or design prior to World War II. In 2007 he purchased a significant portion of the J. Parker Wickham collection in Mattituck, New York which included a diverse selection of Brass Era cars and Nickel Era

jewels like a 1922 Wills Sainte Claire Model A-68 sedan, a 1921 Heine-Velox Victoria and a 1928 Pierce-Arrow Series 81 runabout (and yes, both the Wills Sainte Claire and the Pierce-Arrow are Full Classics®).

Cerny and his staff acquired additional cars, including several Classics, at auction and from private collectors. The museum opened its doors in June of 2009. Today there are 80 vehicles in the Fountainhead Collection, of which approximately 60 are on display at a time. All but a handful are driven each year, making this a true living museum.

Presently there are 12 CCCA Full Classics® in the museum. Our 1931 Cord L-29 cabriolet is an exceptionally-preserved car with fewer than 14,000 original miles on it. With the exception of the tires, paint and trunk, it is mostly original, including the top and interior. L-29 historian Randy Ema has traced this car's provenance back to 1934. Wartime gas rationing forced its owners to park the Cord in storage where it wouldn't be liberated until 1951. Next owner Dan Baumgar apparently never drove the car before selling it to Clarence Hinke, Jr. in 1958. Hinke performed some mechanical repairs on it before Michael Bobek purchased it in 1963; we bought it from subsequent owner Gary Littrell.

The history of the museum's Packards is less extensive. We acquired the 1936 Packard Twelve Model 1408 touring from the John Berra collection, following a frame-off restoration. Our 1930 Packard Deluxe Eight Model 745 roadster resided in Texas before undergoing a high-quality restoration in California in 2000. It was used as a tour car and won numerous awards,

including First Place in the 2003 Packard International Grand Salon and a CCCA Premier award in 2008.

Our 1932 Chrysler Imperial CL convertible sedan, a former Otis Chandler car, earned its CCCA Premier award in 1993 while under Phil Renick's ownership. The 1932 Cadillac series 452-B V-16 Imperial limousine was purchased from the Richard Paine collection in 2008. We showed it at the 2011 Amelia Island Concours d'Elegance where it won the Amelia Island Award as the Most Elegant Formal Sedan or Town Car. Last November the Cadillac joined three other vintage cars for the first crossing of the new Veterans Memorial Bridge spanning the Chena River in downtown Fairbanks. Despite a temperature of -5° F the big car (and its floor heater) performed well.

Our other Classics include a 1921 Daniels Model D touring (one of just three Daniels in the CCCA), a 1925 Stutz Speedway Six series 695 Sportbrohm, a 1927 Stutz custom series AA Black Hawk boattail speedster, a 1933 Auburn Twelve boattail speedster and a 1934 Packard Twelve Touring. The Daniels, along with a 1906 Compound, a 1919 McFarlan, a 1920 Argonne and a 1921 Heine-Velox, were once part of the William F. Harrah Collection. The Compound and Argonne are the last-known survivors of their marques, while the 1898 Hay Motor Vehicle and 1905 Sheldon on display were the only ones of their kind built. The elegant 1919 McFarlan Type 125 sport touring, once owned by silent film star Wallace Reid, took First in Class at the 2012 Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance.

The Fountainhead Antique Auto Museum is open year-round, with limited winter hours. We enjoy robust traffic from tourists, including the few car clubs that are hardy enough to traverse the Alaska Highway each summer. We would be delighted to host a CARavan and welcome any CCCA members who visit Fairbanks. The museum is conveniently located at Wedgewood Resort which offers free parking, a hotel, family-style suites, a summer restaurant and easy access to downtown Fairbanks and other museums.

In addition to the cars, museum visitors can enjoy exhibits about Alaska's unique automobile history, including films and photographs highlighting the challenges faced by our first motorists. There are also more than 100 pieces of historic clothing on display. The combination of Alaska history, automobiles and period fashions have made the Fountainhead Museum a top-ranked attraction on Trip Advisor and earned the museum a coveted "Top Choice" rating from Lonely Planet.

"This is without question the finest antique auto museum we've ever seen," wrote one Trip Advisor reviewer recently.



Msnbc.com listed it as one of the top-12 car museums in the United States that is "worth a detour." "Who would ever think such a perfect car museum would exist in this remote part of the country?" wrote another reviewer. "I have been to many car museums all over the world and this rates as one of the best."

For more information about the Fountainhead Antique Auto Museum call 907-450-2100 or visit [www.fountainheadmuseum.com](http://www.fountainheadmuseum.com). ■

Left and right:

1922 Wills Sainte Claire A-68 Sedan  
1928 Pierce-Arrow Series 81 Runabout







*At left, above and below:  
1930 Packard 745 Roadster  
1936 Packard Twelve 1408 Touring*

*Below:  
1931 Cord L-29 Cabriolet*







Left, from the top:  
1932 Cadillac 452-B Imperial Limousine, Fleetwood  
1921 Daniels Model D Touring  
1925 Stutz Speedway Six 695 Sportbrohm  
1927 Stutz AA Black Hawk Boattail Speedster

Right, above:  
1932 Chrysler Custom Imperial CL Convertible Sedan, LeBaron

Middle and bottom:  
1933 Auburn Twelve Boattail Speedster  
1934 Packard 1107 Touring

