



Cadillac Dream Cars Show

Story by Charles D. Barnette * Photography by Dan Reed and Daniel Jobe

On the weekend of Oct. 25–26, the Potomac Region held its annual Fall Car Show event at Capitol Cadillac in Greenbelt, Md. This year's theme was "Cadillac Dream Cars," and featured four special cars from the GM Heritage Collection in Michigan and two that are privately owned.

As a thank-you to Potomac Region members who donated \$200 or more to help cover the expense of transporting the GM cars to Maryland, a special reception was held at the dealership the night before the show to preview the collection. It included a 1903 Model A Runabout, representing the very first year of Cadillac production; the 1956 Maharani, a special Series Sixty Special nicknamed the "Kitchen Sink Cadillac"; the 2002 Cien, a V-12-powered concept car developed to usher in Cadillac's 100th anniversary; the 2003 Sixteen, a rear-wheel-drive V-16 emulating custom-built Fleetwood coach cars of the 1930s; and both of the remaining 1953 LeMans, a two-seater concept car that was one of the stars of GM's Motorama traveling show of dream cars.

Four LeMans were built and only two

are known to exist today. LeMans No. 4 is owned by the GM Heritage Center, was substantially restyled by GM in the late '50s and fitted with a new motor. LeMans No. 3 is owned by Potomac Region member Scott Milestone and has not been available for public viewing in more than 20 years. No one knows for sure when, if ever, two LeMans were together at the same event.

The 1956 Maharani, one of the show cars displayed at the Motorama at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York, was

▲ **THE LEMANS SHOW CARS** Nos. 3 and 4, owned respectively by Potomac Region member Scott Milestone and the GM Heritage Center. This is probably the first time both LeMans have appeared together.

▼ **JOSHUA MODLINGER'S 1956 Fleetwood 60 Special** known as the Maharani also made an appearance at the show. Vince Taliano's son Jack poses in front of history. The Maharani made its first appearance at the 1956 Motorama held at the Waldorf-Astoria.



brought to the show from New York by Joshua Modlinger, the current owner. This car is factory modified with a host of new-for-1956 kitchen appliances, where the passenger side of the front seat would normally be; hence, the nickname. By the way, the word “Maharani” is the female version of “Maharajah,” who was, of course, a ruler of India, and the exquisite interior trim in this car reflects the motif of Far Eastern design, or at least Cadillac’s concept of what Far Eastern design would look like.

Having had the role of researching the 1953 Cadillac LeMans’ stories for David Temple’s book “GM’s Motorama,” there was no doubt in my mind that I would attend this event. During the research, David and I uncovered two important documents to unravel the four complex stories of LeMans. The first was the bill of sale, dated Dec. 1, 1984, between John Crowell of Pleasanton, Calif., (new buyer) and D.A. Thomas of Dayton, Ohio, (with agent Fred L. Miller acting on behalf of Thomas). The serial number in that document proved we were concerned here with LeMans No. 1 (Serial No. 02), which was the first LeMans. This car was the Motorama car and the one sold to Harry Karl,

BELOW: Charles D. Barnette of Texarkana, Ark., slips behind the wheel to examine the dashboard, with owner Scott Milestone looking on. Charles covers the annual North American International Auto Show in Detroit for THE SELF-STARTER.

BOTTOM: Charles examined the knobs on both LeMans dashboards for fittings and design similarity. A variation of this dashboard ended up on the 1958 Bonneville.



who had it customized for his wife, actress Marie McDonald, by George Barris. Unfortunately, the car was totally destroyed by fire in 1985.

The second document uncovered was a title issued by Washington, D.C., to Floyd Akers (founder of Capitol Cadillac and grandfather of Daniel Jobe, present owner of Capitol Cadillac) dated Aug. 12, 1955. The serial number of this document proved that the document was dealing with LeMans No. 3 (Serial No. 04). We already knew that LeMans No. 4 had been built for Bud Goodman of Fisher Body and is now owned by the GM Heritage Center. That left LeMans No. 2 (Serial No. 03) unaccounted for and last seen in late 1953 in Oklahoma City, on display at the Greenlease-Moore Cadillac dealership.

While dealing with the history of the first LeMans, Fred Miller named prior gave me items from the car that were accidentally left behind when the car left Ohio for its "fatal home" of California. These items included four silver chrome knobs (tops) for the four levers on the dash of LeMans operating the two vents, temperature and defrost. When I came to Greenbelt, Md., on Saturday, Oct. 25, I brought these items with me.

Aside from seeing the superb LeMans sisters (Nos. 3 and 4), the beautiful 1956 Maharani show car, the historic 1903 Cadillac, the "Centennial" Cien show car and the fabulous Cadillac Sixteen, three major highlights occurred for me at the show that I simply must share in writing.

The first highlight occurred on Saturday night, when owner Scott Milestone allowed me to sit in LeMans



WHAT WOULD A SIGNIFICANT CAR SHOW BE without a party? For those who paid extra, Saturday was unforgettable.

No. 3. It was missing all four of its chrome lever tops on the dash, and I had already made up my mind that these items from LeMans No. 1 were going to be donated by me to LeMans No. 3. I am convinced these lever tops are still soaked in DNA from Harley Earl and from the actress Marie McDonald.

While seated in LeMans No. 3 with Scott by my side, I carefully took out of my little silver box one lever top from LeMans No. 1 and carefully placed it onto the fourth lever of LeMans No. 3. I began to screw the top on and as Cadillac and the "Motorama Gods" would have it, it was a perfect match (rod and top), with the top screwing

down securely on the lever.

At that moment, LeMans No. 1 started living again through LeMans No. 3. Also at that moment, my mind was flooded by the 1908 Dewar Trophy-documented feat of Cadillac that took three Cadillacs apart, scrambled the parts and then was able to have three running Cadillacs assembled from same. "Interchangeability" of parts is what we are talking about, but it was also true on hand-built 1953 show cars. Finally, at that moment, I let out an unprofessional yell that probably could have curled someone's toenails. A Cadillac historical moment I will never forget!

On Sunday, the second highlight was seeing Tomajean Haugerud, Daniel Jobe's mother, behind the wheel of LeMans No. 3 that was once her car and seeing not only her reaction but that of LeMans No. 3. They both seemed to be happy

THE LINES OF '53 LeMANS are evident in the extra clean 1954 Eldorado owned by Frank Pinola of Harrisburg, Pa.





A BREATHTAKING GROUP of the old and the new show cars: The two LeMans, a 1903 Model A Runabout, the Cien Concept and the Sixteen Concept, all at attention and ready for inspection.

to be reunited after many years. LeMans No. 4 was enviously observing the event (parked right next door in public to LeMans No. 3 probably for the first time ever). Daniel Jobe later told me that his sister phoned and told him that their mother was so excited that his sister could not get their mother off the phone for hours while relating the experience!

Also on that Sunday, the third highlight occurred at the conclusion of my remarks, when I was given the privilege of presenting to Scott Milestone (owner of LeMans No. 3) a framed copy of the Washington, D.C., title referred to prior.

The car now has its proper credentials and correct place in automotive and Cadillac history. The LeMans was Cadillac's first true "Dream Car" and LeMans No. 3 is the only known existing original example of the pure stock form of this car. The research that David Temple and I did for the GM Motorama book has come full circle!

Eighty cars were at the show, including Byron and Alida Alsop's 1936 V-12 Series 85 Convertible Sedan (Best in Show and Ladies' Choice), Richard Sisson's 1954 Eldorado (Best Post-War), Tom Smith's 1941 Series 75 Limousine (Best Pre-War) and Frank Pinola's 1954 Eldorado

(Dealer's Choice). Other notable cars included a 1940 LaSalle Four-Door Convertible, a 1953 Eldorado and a 1973 Series 75 Limousine used by first lady Pat Nixon.

Spectators from 20 percent of the states attended the show, including four CLC vice presidents and three CLC Region directors; David Temple of Texas, author of "GM's Motorama"; Jim Jordan, Motorama enthusiast from Oklahoma; and Jack Frank of California, who is re-creating LeMans No. 2 in steel.

It was an unprecedented Cadillac historical weekend that I was proud and honored to be a part of. I want to give

special thanks to Vince Taliano, Diane and Henry Ruby, Richard Sisson, Richard Sills and Daniel Jobe. The Potomac Region and Capitol Cadillac of Greenbelt, Md., are simply the best!

I want to additionally list for special thanks Scott Milestone, owner of LeMans No. 3; Joshua Modlinger, owner of the 1956 Maharani; and Carla Tynes, my legal assistant who, under careful guidance, has become a Cadillac expert. Cadillac is still "The Standard of the World!" ■

Charles D. Barnette, noted Cadillac LeMans historian, is from Texarkana, Ark.



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