

For What It's WORTH

AUTO APPRAISAL GROUP™

Issue 2 • 2005

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Motorcar Portfolio Is First AAG Five Star Dealership

Motorcar Portfolio, one of America's premier classic car dealerships, has signed on as the first to use the Auto Appraisal Group's Five Star Rating System to evaluate all cars in their inventory. "We believe that an impartial rating of our vehicles presented to the public is the most straight forward and honest approach to selling cars of the caliber we offer," says Bob Lichty, of Motorcar Portfolio. "We have welcomed pre-purchase inspectors to our showroom for a long time," he continues, and adds, "AAG came to the forefront of our attention when they clearly performed the most professional inspections of any company we dealt with."

AAG inspection agents work on-site at the 15,000 sq. ft. Motorcar Portfolio showroom in the Canton Marriott Hotel to perform the evaluations. Each car will carry a certificate from AAG showing its rating. The Motorcar Portfolio Web site, www.motorcarportfolio.com, will show the five star rating as well. Motorcar Portfolio is pleased to be the first dealer to commit their full inventory to this level of professional scrutiny.



**Five Star
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1967 Chevrolet Impala SS, one of the Five Star rated vehicles offered by Motorcar Portfolio.

PHOTOGRAPH
COURTESY OF
MOTORCAR PORTFOLIO

Superstar Cars Shine at Bonhams' Sale of George Barris' Kustom Creations



George Barris and Batman team up on the Batcycle.

from *Fastlane*. It brought the top price of \$109,250. "Grease Lightning," was the second highest selling car at \$88,550. The 1964 Ford was designed after the street rod seen in *Grease*. This car shared a stage with Olivia Newton John during a recent concert. The Batcycle from the original television series *Batman* sold for \$51,750. "Holy transformations, Batman!" – it started life as a 1966 250cc Yamaha.

The purple 1969 Auburn replica with purple faux fur interior driven by Madonna in *Dick Tracy* sold for \$52,900. A red 1975 Ford Gran Torino with the identifiable white swoop started life as a stand-in of the car used in TV's *Starsky & Hutch* and brought \$37,950. \$69,000 was the successful bid for "KITT" from *Knightrider* (a 1984 Pontiac Firebird) which will also be featured in a Sony Studios film expected to

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOY MEHULKA

Bonhams & Butterfields' May 14, 2005 auction of the George Barris Collection of Kustom, Television and Movie Cars, and other properties was a star-studded success. The event took place in a most appropriate setting, at Los Angeles' Petersen Automotive Museum.

The majority of the property in this exciting sale was created by the legendary George Barris and Barris Kustom Industries, his North Hollywood, California shop. For the past five decades, George Barris has created memorable and remarkable motorcars used in film and television, becoming a consultant to producers and providing famous cars known around the world.

Filmmaking master Alfred Hitchcock used cars created and refurbished by George Barris beginning in the 1950s and a "who's who" of notable directors has subsequently sought his design talents. The Barris craftsmen, working in the Barris Kustom shop, have de-

signed and built cars seen on many network television programs through the 1970s, '80s, and '90s. Just as fashion designers would craft wardrobes to enhance the development of a fictional on-screen character, George Barris became the "go-to" man in Hollywood to design and develop character-defining motorcars to be driven – and often crashed – by leading men and ladies.

Through Barris' involvement, automobiles became stars in their own rite and the Barris garage of kustom superstar cars includes the Batmobile, the Munster Koach, "KITT" – the *Knightrider* car, the "Ecto car" ambulance from *Ghost Busters*, and many others.

Auction highlights included the fantastically futuristic Hero Car



Drag-u-la from the television series *The Munsters*.

begin shooting soon after the Bonhams & Butterfields auction.



The Hero Car designed for Fastlane was the top seller at \$109,250. A 1975 Rolls-Royce Corniche Turbo also brought that price.

George Barris is an icon among custom car builders. There is not a single person in the business today who is unfamiliar with his life-work and legacy.

The Dukes of Hazzard's "General Lee," sold for \$57,500. The 1969 Dodge Charger was used as a standby car for the popular TV series, toured with the stars of the show for personal appearances, and was used in the taping of a Kid Rock video. Another car with lots of country flavor, the Beverly Hillbillies' jalopy, the "Swamp Rat," brought the big-city price of \$55,200. It was built and used in scenes of the remake feature film.

Barris Kustom Works has created a multitude of cars for film studios and television production companies specifically for publicity events, national car shows, and museums. This auction featured immediately recognizable show cars including the Flintstone's Flintmobile, created on contract for Universal Studios and toured nationally in the World of Wheels and Autorama Car shows (\$18,400); 1981 DeLorean built for publicity events for the film *Back to the Future* (\$40,250); and a

1966 Chrysler Imperial identifiable to fans as the Green Hornet's "Black Beauty," which spent time in a museum exhibit (\$23,000).

Sales of famous tuner cars were fast and furious at the auction. The sports cars used on screen in *The Fast & the Furious* were snapped up by collectors. The 1993 Mazda RX7 driven by Vin Diesel sold for \$40,250 and the 1995 Mitsubishi Eclipse driven by Paul Walker brought \$23,000. Both of these models were built by Eddy Paul. A Honda and a Nissan used on screen in the sequel *2 Fast 2 Furious*, each restored under the supervision of George Barris, brought \$24,150 and \$18,400.

This exciting sale at the Petersen Auto Museum included other custom cars and motorcycles and a large array of props from the entertainment industry. Interest was revving high from automotive and motorcycle enthusiasts as well as collectors of entertainment memorabilia.



Above: The Swamp Rat, the signature vehicle of the Beverly Hillbillies, complete with Grannie's rocker.



Above: Outrageous fins are just one of the kustom features found on Grease Lightning, based on the car driven by John Travolta in Grease.



Above: The 1993 Mazda RX7 driven by Vin Diesel in *The Fast and The Furious* was one of the tuner cars offered at the Bonhams auction.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOY MEHULKA

A Love Affair That Has Stood the Test of Time

By Tom Peluso



Tom Peluso of Santa Margarita, California, with three of his beautiful Ford Thunderbirds.

My love affair started in 1957, when I was 10 years old. My father had purchased a new 1957 Ford Fairlane two-door hardtop and I went with him to pick it up – which I thought was really cool. He told me that he liked the Fairlane but what he really loved was another car, so he took me around the other side of the dealership to see this car called a Thunderbird.

He said because it was only a two-seater, it was impractical for a family our size (five boys and two girls). Impractical or not, it was love at first sight for me. I said to my father, "Someday, I'm going to get me one of these Thunderbirds."

When I was 17, I got the '57 Fairlane to drive, after my other brothers had it first. It was seven years old by then, but it was still a fun car and very powerful, with its Thunderbird Interceptor 312 engine. I had many other cars after that, but my dream was to own one of those "baby" Thunderbirds. Pricewise they were still out of my range but the dream goes on. . .

Fast forward to 1975. Having been married for a couple of years,

I said to my wife, "Let's buy a classic car, a T-Bird!" She said, "You're crazy! We need a house more than an old car." The dream goes on. . .

Fast forward to July 1990. I said to my wife, "I'm going to buy a classic car instead of buying a new car and use it as my daily driver. You know that I always wanted a two-seater Thunderbird and I'm going to get me one!" Surprisingly, she said, "YES!" The hunt was on!

I wanted either a red 1957 T-Bird with all white interior, or a Starmist blue one with all white interior. (It didn't take much time to decide what I wanted as I'd been thinking about it since I was a teenager!).

After looking at quite a few T-Birds from '55, '56, and '57, my wife decided that she did not like the fins on the '57s. I said, "Who is buying this T-Bird – me or you?" She said that the black 1955 T-Bird we were looking at was what I should get because she thought it was "cute."

We looked at more T-Birds and after a few more days I decided that the black '55 T-Bird was priced

right and in better condition than all of the other T-Birds we had looked at. And, my wife liked it, too! (Can't go wrong there.)

On August 18, 1990 I (we) became the proud owner(s) of the black 1955 Thunderbird. It came from Arvada, Colorado and was originally owned by a doctor there. It had a solid, rust-free body with only 98,000 original miles on it. Later on that year, I had it stripped down to bare metal, repainted it black again, and installed new seats, door panels, and carpeting.

I joined a local club and also CTCI (Classic Thunderbird Club International) and over the years have won many awards with the T-Bird. I have been very active with the local club and held many board positions including President, a couple of times. In 1993 I became a field agent for the Auto Appraisal Group.

The best thing about my involvement with cars is that I have made many long-lasting friends. The best relationships are ones that stand the test of time, whether personal or automotive!

Classics and Muscle Cars are Tops in Branson

Results from the Spring 2004 Branson Collector Car Auction show strong results in all areas with early classic cars and modern muscle bringing the highest prices. More than 400 cars were offered to buyers during this popular event

The top seller was a 1931 Cadillac V-16 Roadster at \$307,400. The gavel dropped at \$153,700 for a 1970 Plymouth Superbird Hardtop Hemi. A 1931 L29 Cord Cabriolet sold for \$127,200 and a 1968 Shelby GT500 Convertible went for \$92,750. A Fastback version of the '68 Shelby GT500 sold for \$60,420. \$32,542 was the successful bid for a 1967 Mustang Fastback Coupe equipped with a 390 V-8.

Do I Really Need an Appraisal?

Collector car values continue to change, sometimes rapidly. Your appraisal should reflect current value. If you do not have an appraisal, you need one to protect what may be an escalating investment. An up-to-date appraisal also lets you determine if you need to adjust your insurance coverage and gives you the documentation you will need. The following examples show how values have risen in the past 25 years. All vehicles used in these examples were in Five or Four Star condition.

1957 Chevrolet Bel Air Convertible

1988: \$35,000
1990: \$52,000
1993: \$35,000
1995: \$43,000
1996: \$35,000
1998: \$45,700
2000: \$55,000
2002: \$61,000
2003: \$61,000
2005: \$135,000



1964 Chevrolet Impala

1988: \$12,000
1990: \$17,000
1993: \$14,000
1995: \$16,000
1996: \$12,000
1998: \$18,000
2000: \$20,000
2002: \$26,000
2003: \$26,000
2005: \$55,000



1961 Chrysler 300G Convertible

1988: \$17,400
1990: \$25,000
1993: \$52,000
1995: \$48,000
1996: \$46,000
1998: \$46,000
2000: \$46,000
2002: \$51,000
2003: \$51,000
2005: \$222,500



1936 Auburn 852 Cabriolet

1988: \$80,000
1990: \$78,000
1993: \$92,000
1995: \$124,000
1996: \$124,000
1998: \$124,000
2000: \$124,000
2002: \$124,000
2003: \$119,000
2005: \$174,960



1969 Plymouth Hemi Road Runner

1988: \$22,100
1990: \$34,500
1993: \$33,000
1996: \$39,000
1998: \$40,500
2000: \$40,500
2002: \$60,000
2003: \$60,000
2004: \$77,000
2005: \$125,000



1954 Buick Skylark Convertible

1988: \$26,000
1990: \$45,000
1993: \$47,000
1995: \$48,000
1996: \$52,000
1998: \$54,000
2000: \$54,000
2002: \$59,000
2003: \$59,000
2005: \$97,200



1956 Ford Thunderbird

1988: \$37,000
1990: \$55,000
1993: \$43,000
1995: \$45,000
1996: \$49,000
1998: \$52,000
2000: \$58,000
2002: \$62,000
2003: \$78,000
2005: \$93,960



1948 Chevrolet Suburban

1988: \$7,300
1990: \$10,000
1993: \$10,000
1995: \$10,000
1996: \$12,000
1998: \$12,700
2000: \$12,700
2002: \$20,000
2003: \$21,000
2005: \$50,760



1978 Triumph Spitfire Convertible

1988: \$5,200
1990: \$5,800
1993: \$6,000
1995: \$6,000
1996: \$6,000
1998: \$6,000
2000: \$10,000
2002: \$11,000
2003: \$11,000
2005: \$25,000



Auto Appraisal Group Holds Certification Training at Imperial Palace

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ROBERT VAUGHN

The Auto Appraisal Group recently completed its second four-day training session for new field agents at the Imperial Palace in Las Vegas, Nevada. Agents learned the company's comprehensive process for compiling accurate appraisal data using the diverse selection of collector vehicles housed in the Auto Collections at the Imperial Palace Hotel and Casino as their test cases. AAG's agents are trained, tested, and certified to consistently evaluate the condition of all types of vehicles.

The Auto Appraisal Group continues to add new field agents to its team of knowledgeable and respected appraisal professionals in response to a rapidly increasing demand for AAG's services.

"The Imperial Palace is an ideal location for an AAG training session," says Robert Vaughn, Western Region Director for the Auto Appraisal Group. "Having access to the cars in the collection gives our new agents the chance to evaluate a wide variety of outstanding vehicles. The hospitality extended to AAG by Ritchie Cline, Rob Williams, and the entire collections staff makes this a rewarding and enjoyable experience for our company."

The Auto Collections at the Imperial Palace Hotel and Casino is the largest indoor showroom of collector and special interest cars available for sale in the country. The collection changes on a regular basis and provides a rare opportunity to not only view outstanding cars, but drive away with the one you like best. The Auto Collections is open daily from 9:30 A.M. to 11:30 P.M. and is located on the fifth floor of the parking structure of the hotel and casino.



New AAG agents Pat Ballogg, Wickinburg, Arizona; (at left) and Marv Barrish, Camarillo, California, inspect a 1957 Oldsmobile Holiday.



No detail of this 1966 Corvette 427 4-Speed Roadster escapes the scrutiny of (from left) Peter Rasmussen, Oconomowoc, Wisconsin; Kevin Price, Reno, Nevada; and Bill Cullen, Charlotte, North Carolina, during their AAG training.



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August Training Session Will Be Held at Sloan Museum

The Auto Appraisal Group is pleased to announce that the Buick Gallery of the Alfred P. Sloan Museum in Flint, Michigan, will be the site of the August 2-5, 2005 new agent training session. AAG has opportunities for new field agents in many metro areas across the nation. For additional information visit www.autoappraisal.com. Individuals interested in becoming AAG field agents should send résumé and qualifications to:

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Hot Dreams – A 1928 Ahrens Fox Fire Truck

By “Super Pete” Seaholm

As kids, I think we all had dreams and fantasies about what we wanted to be when we grew up. Back then the range of employment possibilities seemed almost limitless – policeman, bus driver, baseball player, rodeo star, doctor (a favorite with moms), or astronaut. You could even dream, as I did, of being a fireman. Which leads me to this story, which happened once I'd grown up and become an auto appraiser.

From the time I was 10 or 12 years old, I've loved old cars and trucks. Over the years I've been involved in the automotive business in several areas including working as a mechanic, as a garage owner, and as a collector car appraiser. Recently, I had the distinct pleasure of appraising a particularly handsome, almost legendary machine, an Ahrens Fox front pumper firetruck with right hand steering.

I arrived on location to start the appraisal of the Ahrens Fox. It was a beauty. Its classic lines took my thoughts back to my childhood in New York. Whenever I heard the sound of a fire whistle I would run down to the corner to watch the firetrucks speed by. I stood there waving at each one as it raced to the fire, sirens screaming, bells clanging, and exhaust roaring. The sheer excitement of it all gave me the shivers!

My thoughts soon returned to the present. “What a great job this is,” I reflected. Here I was as an adult being called upon to examine and appraise one of the greatest firetrucks of them all. Imagine being paid to do something you love doing!

During my appraisal I was given a test drive of the huge machine. I could easily picture myself with a



PHOTOGRAPHS BY PETE SEAHOLM

fire helmet, turnout suit, boots, and equipment, hanging on for dear life as the truck rushed to the next emergency, keeping a firm grip as we raced through the town, hoping not to fall out as we sped around the corners.

My hat goes off to the firemen of those golden days and for the job they performed. Beautiful as it is, a 1928 Ahrens Fox is a far cry

“What a great job this is,” I reflected. Here I was being called upon to appraise one of the greatest firetrucks of them all. Imagine being paid to do something you love doing!

from today's sophisticated fire apparatus. The top speed of the big red behemoth was about 45 miles per hour. The truck has no windshield, so the wind buffeted as you drove along. That noise, combined with the roar of the engine, must have made conversation at any speed nearly impossible. The driver needed a lot of strength just to turn the steering wheel and the truck's turning radius seemed to be roughly equal to that needed by a battleship.

Aside from the lack of a high top speed and a turning radius that could bring tears to your eyes, the Ahrens Fox was a masterpiece of functionality. Among its equipment was a 700-psi front pump with the trademark chrome ball mounted ahead of the windshield, countless nozzle attachments, huge hose storage area, and many grappling-type ladders. There was also a large standing area in the rear for the dedicated fire crew.

To be asked to do this appraisal was an absolute thrill, a dream assignment. It took me back in time for a short while, when I was a little kid watching big men drive big firetrucks.





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How Much is That DB in the Window?

Imperial Palace Offers
1961 Aston-Martin
DB4GT Zagato for
Sale at \$3 Million

One of the numerous unique vehicles currently offered for sale at the Auto Collections at the Imperial Palace Hotel and Casino is one of the coveted Aston Martin DB4GT Zagatos. This car has 7,300

original miles and all the desirable features typical of its kind.

At the London Motor Show in 1960, David Brown stole the limelight of the show from his competitors with the most elegant version of an Aston Martin sports car yet offered. David Brown had sought the attention of the Italian styling house "Zagato" to create an even lighter version of his DB4GT.

Serious exclusivity was instantly guaranteed by the then enormous price tag of £5,470. In all, just 19 of the world's richest auto-

mobile enthusiasts commissioned Aston Martin and Zagato to hand build one for them.

The Zagato, like the DB4GT, was extremely successful in the sports arena, going head-to-head with the Ferrari 250 SWB. In 1961 Kerguen & Franc reached ninth overall in a DB4GT Zagato in the Le Mans 24 Hour Race before being forced to retire by mechanical failure after 23 hours racing.

Interest in the Aston Martin DB4GT is always high. RM Auctions recently sold a 1962 Zagato for nearly \$2,700,000.

The DB4GT Zagato at the Imperial Palace is priced at \$3,000,000.



PHOTOGRAPH BY ROBERT VAUGHN