



Clockwise from top: The Cord with its “eyes” (headlights) open; the stone shield on the rear bumper; the dash showing the speedometer, odometer, trip odometer, ammeter, temperature gauge, oil pressure gauge, combination fuel and oil level gauge, electric clock and radio; awards won by Ed’s Cord; the open door shows leather upholstery; the touch gearshift—move the knob to the desired gear, depress the clutch and it shifts (behind is the fuel/oil gauge).



## Featured Car

# Cord's 1927 Supercharged Phaeton was probably the most stylish American made production car in the 1925-48 Classic Era

*Arizona member Ed Battershell owns a spectacular yellow one*

By Les Jackson

Most old car fans agree that the 1936 and 1937 Cords were the most beautiful American made production cars of the Classic Era (1925-1948). The supercharging option available in the 1937 models added some additional panache.

Actually the only other model that we would consider rivaling the phaeton was the 1937 Cord supercharged convertible Sportsman (no back seat). The CCCA recognizes all Cords as Full Classics<sup>®</sup>, including the earlier L-29 versions from 1929 to 1932. There were no 1933 to 1935 Cords.

Other models produced by Cord for 1937 were the Beverly sedan, the Westchester sedan, the custom Beverly and the custom Berline. The supercharge option was available for any of the 1937 models.

The design is credited to Gordon M. Buehrig, who was then only 30 years old. He had a good design team as well. He passed away in 1990 at the age of 85. In his career he had worked on car design for Packard, General Motors, Duesenberg, Auburn, Cord, Studebaker and after the Classic Era, for Ford on the 1951 hardtop (nc), the ranch wagon (nc) and the Lincoln Mark II (nc).

Perhaps the best way to evaluate the design of the Cord is to compare it with the other cars of 1936 and 1937 (the appearance of the Cords for the two years were essentially the same.)

The Cords had disappearing headlights in the fenders, operated by a crank with a flexible cable on each



The passenger side hand crank on the dash for the Cord headlights.

side of the dash (not vacuum or electric, because the engineers said the crank method was more reliable). The only other 1937 cars with headlights in the fenders were the Pierce-Arrow, the Lincoln K, the Lincoln Zephyr and the Willys. No other American car had disappearing headlights until the 1942 DeSoto (nc).

The top on the phaeton when lowered completely disappears from view, something that a few very recent cars feature. The result of the disappearing top and the spare tire meant there was little other room in the trunk.

The Cords were nearly a foot lower than other cars of the time, because the front-wheel drive eliminated the need of a drive shaft. Cord in 1929 had pioneered the front wheel drive approach, along with



Ed's Cord is serial number 32000H, shown on this original factory plate.

Ruxton that year (see story on page 15 and 16).

Ed acquired his car in 1993 from an owner in Tucson. It had gone through a complete restoration from 1952 to 1980. Ed upgraded the car with new paint in 2002. Since then it has won first place in primary, senior and premier divisions of CCCA Grand Classics and first in primary and senior divisions of the Auburn-Cord-Duesenberg meets. It now has just over 57,000 miles. The serial number is 32000H.

The engine is a V-8 of 288.6 cubic inch displacement with 3½ inch by 3¾ inch bore and stroke. The "regular" Cord V-8 produced 125 horsepower, and

the supercharger increased that to a published number of 170 horsepower. Several non-Cord sources have said that testing showed the increased horsepower level to actually be between 180 and 195 horsepower.

With a weight of 4003 pounds the car is capable of 100 mph in overdrive (4<sup>th</sup> gear). Super Charged Cords held some stock car speed records from runs at the Bonneville Salt Flats by Ab Jenkins. It did a flying mile at 107.66 mph and a 24 hour average of 101.22 mph.

It is easy to identify which Cords are supercharged by the pipes coming out of the both sides of the hood. They are not there only for decorative purposes, but these are the actual exhaust. This method got the hot pipes outside the car and did not keep as much heat in the engine compartment.

Sources differ on the total number of 1936 Series 810 and 1937 Series 812 Cords produced, varying from 2,830 to 3,000 total cars. There were 688 supercharged 1937 Cords, of which 196 were phaetons.

The list price of the 1937 Phaeton was \$2,645, but the supercharger option added \$415 to the cost. (We suspect that the difference between such a car with and without the supercharger is more than that in today's Classic car market.)

The 1936 Cords were first shown in the New York Auto Show on November 2, 1935. The last Cords were built August 21, 1937.

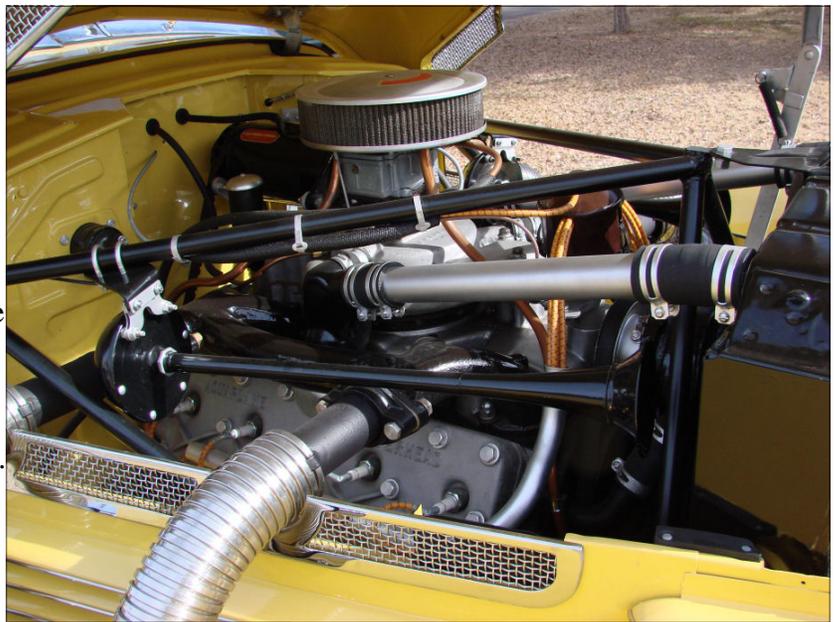
The body dies were sold to Hupp and Graham, each of which produced their own versions, but they did not attract many custom-

## About the Super Charged engine

The Cord Super Charged engine did not become available until November of 1936 for the 1937 models, two months after the introduction of the models in September.

The new FC model Lycoming-built engine had a Schwitzer-Cummins supercharger which was a "pull through" type. It was mounted on top of a special intake manifold with a 1¼ inch Stromberg duplex carburetor. The compression ratio was 6.32 to 1.

There was a heavy timing chain and a different firing order in the engine. The advertised horsepower was 170 at 4200 rpm. The blower drive revision from 6/1 to 6.5/1 increased boost pressure to about 190 horsepower at 4200 rpm.



Above: The V8 engine compartment showing the supercharger setup and air cleaner. Left: Ed stands next to his Cord outside his Phoenix home.



ers and those two old companies were gone soon thereafter. Thus these dies were the last ones for three car companies, Cord, Hupmobile and Graham.

Ed has 36 years of service at Salt River Project in electrical engineering. He is currently working on a multi year project designing sub stations on a Palo Verde power line connection to Casa Grande and Apache Junction.

