

Featured Car

Ken Dennison's 1935 Auburn 851 Supercharged Cabriolet was in pieces when he purchased it

By Les Jackson

Ken Dennison, the owner of this issue's Featured Car, a 1935 supercharged Auburn Cabriolet, reports that the car was in restoration 17 years, including seven years in the body shop.

Obviously it was a very successful restoration as the car won a third place overall and a first in class at the annual Auburn-Cord-Duesenberg meet in 2006 in Auburn, Indiana. It also was authenticated at that time by the Auburn experts. The car has also won other first place awards at Santa Monica, California, and Pasadena, California, Concours.

When Ken first heard about the car it was in parts at a shop where it had been sent by the previous owner before he died. Ken talked to the owner's widow and eventually she agreed to sell him all the parts. At first the restoration shop refused to release the disassembled car to Ken, but a call to the police with Ken having the bill of sale persuaded the shop owner to change his mind.

The floor boards in the rumble seat compartment and much of the rear end of the car had to be fabricated. The Auburn museum in Auburn, Indiana, was a great source of information needed to complete the restoration.

The car has the external pipes on the left side to accommodate the supercharger and the optional side mounted spare in the right fender.

The Supercharged Auburns were introduced January 2, 1935 at the New York auto show, even though the other 1935 Auburns had been in the market since September 10, 1934. The supercharger for the Auburn was designed by Augie Duesenberg.

Auburn "guaranteed" that one of their supercharged cars could attain a speed of over 100 miles per hour.

Ken grew up in the Phoenix area, and spent 22 years in Alaska in the



Above: Ken Dennison stands beside his 1935 Auburn 851 supercharged cabriolet with the optional fender well on the right side.

Below: The left side of the hood area of the Auburn is taken up by the pipes which are part of the supercharging system of the car.

Facing page: Full front view of the Auburn.

construction business before retiring and returning to Arizona. Ken and his wife, Rose, live in north Scottsdale.



Facts about the Supercharged 1935 Auburn 851 Cabriolet

Engine: Lycoming Straight 8 cast en bloc 5 bearing L head, 3 1/16" bore and 4 3/4" stroke with 279.9 cubic inches displacement, developing 150 brake horsepower at 4000 rpm, compression 6.5:1.

Carburetor: Stromberg

Crankcase capacity 8 quarts

Gasoline tank capacity 20 gallons.

Rear axle ratio: 5.00 low and 3.47 high.

Wheelbase: 127"

tire size: 7.00x16

brakes: 4 wheel hydraulic

Factory price: \$1,675.



Started in 1900, Auburn lasted through part of the depression with last models made in 1936

All 8 and 12 cylinder Auburns are considered Full Classics® by CCCA. These include those for model years 1925 though the end of the company's production in 1936.

This issue's featured car is the 1935 Supercharged series 8-851 cabriolet, owned by Ken and Rose Dennison of Scottsdale.

The Auburn Automobile company was founded in 1900 by brothers Frank and Morris Eckhart. By 1924 Errett Lobban Cord entered the picture and became General Manager with a provision that he could acquire control of the company if he could save it. He did it and became president of the company in 1926 at age 31.

In 1925 he introduced the Lycoming engine to the car as models 8-36 and 8-88.

Two tone paint and a line sweeping from the hood to the side of the car were styling attractions which remained in production through 1930.

By 1928 with a more powerful engine, hydraulic brakes and the Bijur lubrication system Auburn was a high end car with a medium price tag.

With the success of Auburn, sales going from 2,474 in 1924 to a high of 34,228 in 1931, Cobb acquired Duesenberg and formed the Cord company.

With the Great Depression, sales plunged and were only 12,808 for the two model years 1933 and 1934 combined.

In 1935, the new Series 851 was introduced, along with a non-classic Series 681 six cylinder model. Sales were still sluggish, with 6,316 in 1935 and only 1,263 in 1936 when the cars were virtually unchanged from the prior year.

That was the last year of Auburn production. There were some 1937 Cords and perhaps a few 1937 Duesenbergs, but that was the end of the Auburn-Cord-Duesenberg story.

EXPLAINING THE AUBURN

SUPER-CHARGER

CARBURETOR

1 Air is drawn through the carburetor where it is mixed with gasoline—then the mixture goes on to the Super-Charger.

SUPER-CHARGER

2 This is the Super-Charger itself, where the mixture from the carburetor is whirled around and around at high speed. In addition to being thoroughly mixed for better burning, it is thrown outward with force, or pressure into the intake manifold.

GASOLINE SUPPLY

AIR CLEANER

3 INTAKE MANIFOLD TO CYLINDERS

Now under pressure, the gas mixture is forced to each cylinder. Naturally it goes into the cylinder faster under pressure than if it were just following the suction of the piston on its down-stroke. The result is, that the cylinders are not only fully charged with explosive gas, but Super-Charged—and that means super-power.

4 PERFECTED MECHANISM

The necessary rotor speed (six times engine speed or as much as 24,000 revolutions per minute) is obtained by steel rollers instead of ordinary gears. No noise, or rapid wear—just smooth rolling contact, like a well-oiled roller bearing in a big electric fan.

Built like a watch, but as rugged as a steam turbine—that means dependability

