

# Among the early luxury cars were the famous three “P’s:” the Packard, the Peerless and the Pierce-Arrow

Only 6 Peerless Full Classics® are listed as owned by CCCA members; none are in the Arizona Region.

Periodically *The Roadrunner* prints an article about American made Full Classics®. The most recent article about Nash was in the April-May 2006 edition. Watch for stories about Packard and Pierce-Arrow in the future.

By Les Jackson

Peerless was one of the most famous luxury cars of the Teens and Twenties, although production was never very high, reaching a high in 1926 of 10,430 units. By 1931 the number had dropped to 1,249 and the company was gone. Some of the remaining cars were sold as 1932 models.

Manufactured in Cleveland, the Peerless was prominent in races and setting speed records in its early years. They produced a V-8 in 1916, shortly after Cadillac had done so, but it was phased out in 1928 and replaced with a straight eight.

In 1930 the famed Russian Alexis de Sakhnoffsky designed the cars. The last Peerless was the most spectacular, and

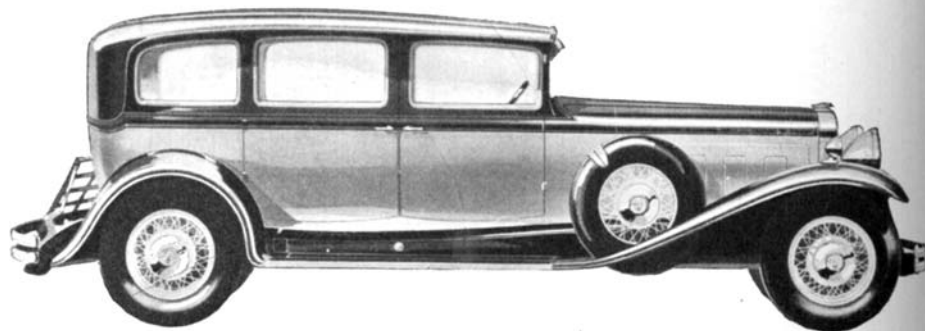
now resides in the Crawford Museum in Cleveland. It was a V-16 sedan.

After ceasing car production the company went into the brewing business producing Carling beers and ales.

The *CCCA Handbook* lists the following as Full Classics®: 1925: Series 67; 1926-28: Series 69; 1930-31: Custom 8; and 1932 Deluxe Custom 8. The company also produced non-classics in those years and none of the 1929 models are recognized by CCCA.



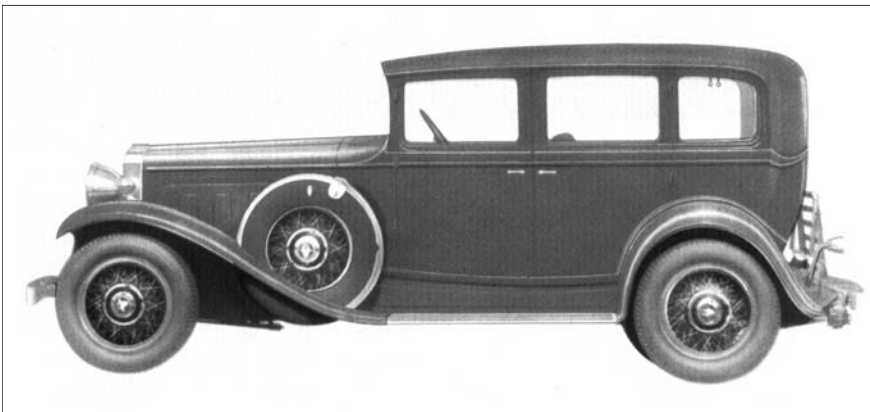
This is the 1927 Peerless model 69 Roadster. Two ladies wearing cloche hats of the period are shown in the car. Peerless described it as “A low slung, powerful car of distinctive beauty. Seats two in front seat and two in commodious rumble seat...Bumpers, bumperettes, closing wings and winterfront are standard equipment. Snug fitting curtains assure all-weather comfort.”



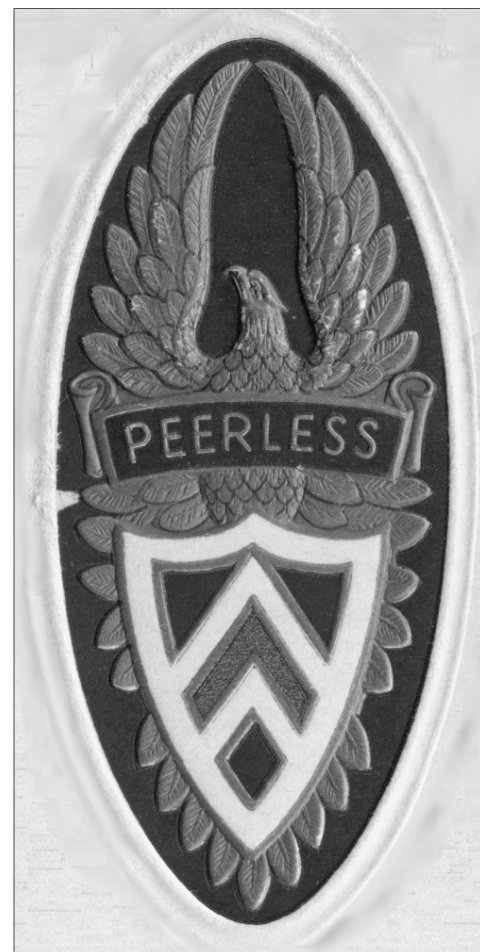
The 1930 Peerless custom eight 5 passenger sedan. The wheelbase is 138 inches and the straight eight motor develops “in excess” of 120 horsepower at 3200 rpm according to the company. It also said of the car: “...long life not to be excelled by any other car.”

We noted what may be an inconsistency in the *Handbook*. The 1932 Full Classic® is identified as the Deluxe Custom 8. In the listing of cars owned by members there is a Deluxe 8 sedan shown for 1932. Is this the same as a Deluxe Custom? On this page we show a picture from the catalog mailed by Peerless August 31, 1931 which is a Deluxe 8. Another 1932 Peerless folder shows three series: Standard, Master and

Custom (no DeLuxe). *The Standard catalog of American Cars 1805-1942* does not show Peerless making a Deluxe 8 in 1931, and does not indicate any series for 1932. The recent lists of approved cars printed in the *CCCA Bulletin* in November 2005, February and April 2006 do not show a Deluxe 1932.



This is the 1931 or 1932 Peerless Deluxe Master 8 series passenger sedan. The regular list price was advertised as \$2,320, ordered directly from the factory it was only \$1,624. This offer was dated August 31, 1931. Sources say the last Peerless was built on June 30, 1931. The only one after that was the single V-16. Also offered in this series were the Deluxe Cabriolet with rumble seat, the Deluxe coupe with rumble seat and the Deluxe 5 passenger club sedan.



## Rust Heinz of '57 Varieties' fame designed the Phantom Corsair built by Bohman & Schwartz

### **Andy Granatelli worked on the design of the Lycoming engine**

It was 1938 and Rust Heinz of the famous condition family designed the coachwork of what was a one-off car.

The famous coach builders Bohman & Schwartz built the car with Andy Granatelli beefing up the Cord Lycoming V-8 engine with a semi-racing camshaft. The car is said to have cost \$24,000 to build and was to be marketed for just over half that. Unfortunately, Heinz died the following year at age 24.

Herb Shriner once owned the car. It is now in the National Automobile Museum (the Harrah collection) in Reno, NV. The car was approved as a CCCA Full Classic® in July 1974.

There were many unique features about the car, other than its unusual streamlined design.

The headlights were built in, with fog lights lower in the car body. The chromium lined tunnels of the lights reflected light to the sides of the car as well as lighting straight ahead.

In the back seat there were "luxury compartments" on either side. Thermos bottles of stainless steel and glasses of spun aluminum were stored there. A light came on automatically when the compartment was opened.

The two-door car's front seat with a width of 67½ inches was able to handle four adults. A button on the dash opened the hood. The front doors opened partially into the roof to ease ingress and egress.

There were no door handles, just a push button on the outside and on the inside. The bumpers were three parallel plates of spring steel connected by

*(Continued on page 12)*

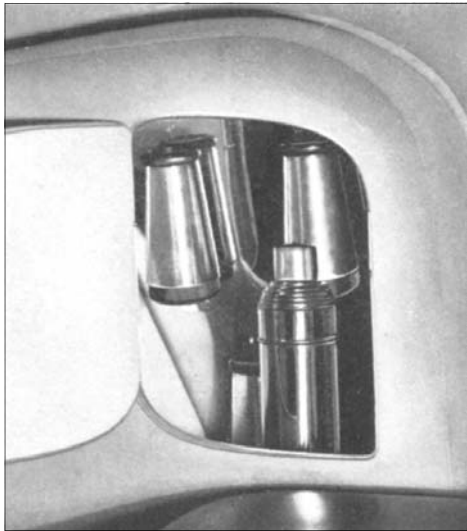
(Continued from page 11)

tubular arms with recoil spring action working in connection with the hydraulic unit.

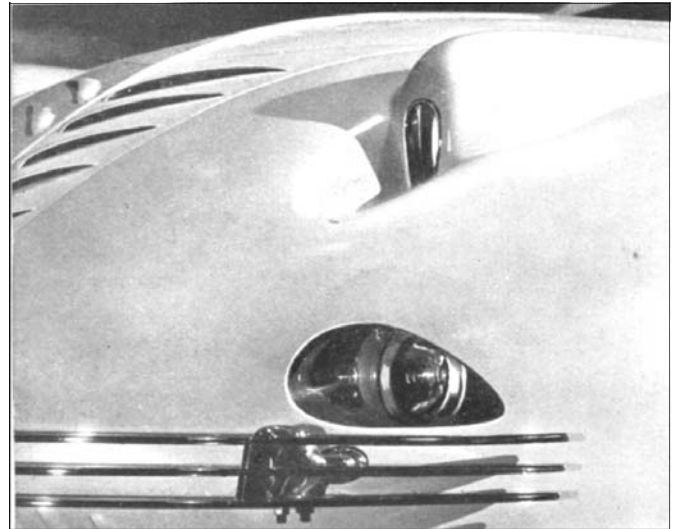
There was no muffler per se. At the rear of the tail pipe gasses pass through a series of expansion chambers to deaden the sound.

An "all-wave" radio with two speakers was built in with an aerial underneath the car.

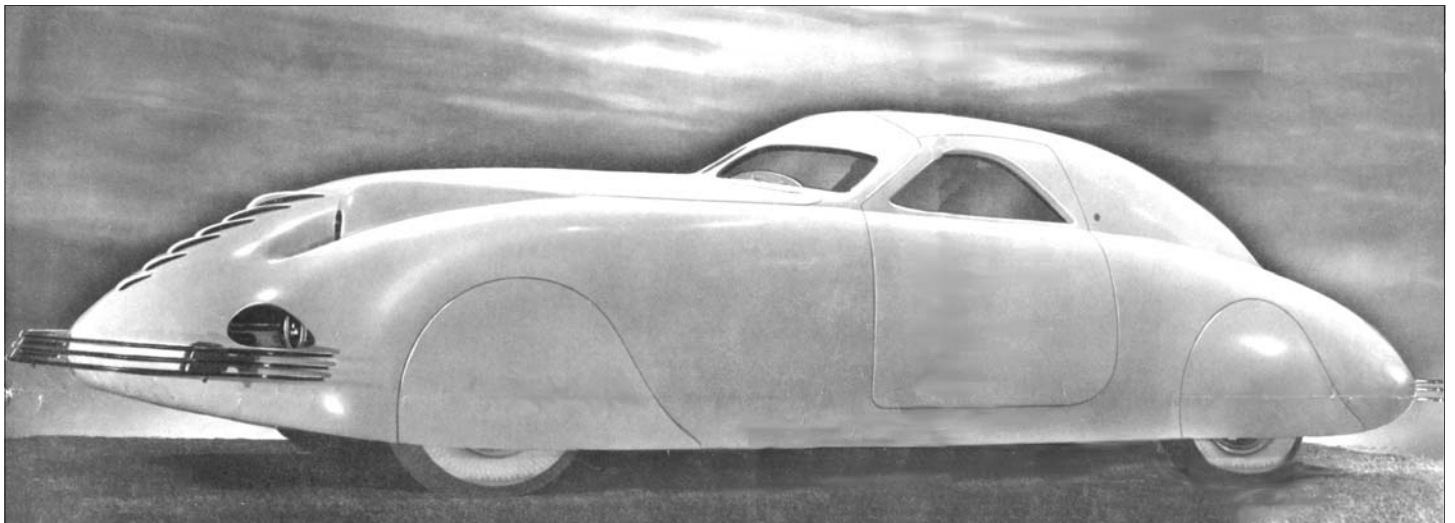
Remember this was a 1938 design!



The compartments in the back seat (called a rumble seat although it was inside the vehicle) held bottles and glasses. Not quite like the cup holders we have in today's cars!



The unique headlight and fog light design into the body of the car which did not have fenders, but was all "body". Superior lighting was claimed because of the chrome reflecting effect of the lighting design. It was claimed that the chrome reflection would cast light to the side of the car in addition to the regular forward projection of the light.



The Phantom Corsair was of molybdenum and electrically-welded aviation all-steel construction. Green tinted safety glass was used for the 6 passenger coupe (4 in front and 2 in back). The top speed was advertised as 115 mph. It was claimed to have winter and summer air conditioning.

**Sources:** *The Phantom Corsair*, Phantom Corsair, 625 South Orange Grove, Pasadena, CA. *Peerless 90" V-Type Eight Model 69*, Form No. 692, Peerless Motor Car Corporation. *The Motor Annual*, January, 1930. *The Straight Line Plan*, Peerless Motor Car Corporation, Cleveland, Ohio, mailed Aug. 31, 1931 to a prospective customer in Wakeman, OH. *Standard catalog of American Cars 1805-1942 Third edition*, Beverly Rae Kimes and Henry Austin Clark, Jr., Krause Publications, Iola, WI, 1996. *The Production Figure Book for U.S. Cars*, Jerry Heasley, Motorbooks International, Osceola, WI, 1977.