



Ruuderow's American Austin



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Other cars.

As I prepare for our Maui vacation, it occurred to me that it is an opportune time to fill the newsletter with non de Tomaso stuff. One item in that category is the fact that we all own other cars in our garages (or elsewhere). At some point I wanted to explore some of these rides in your behalf. The first of these is one that our Prez owns, the 1932 American Austin. Born at the height of the Depression this diminutive car provided basic transportation as the truly first "compact car" fashioned after its bigger brethren.

The following is an excerpt from the September 2007 *Auto Restorer* magazine:

1930-34 American Austin & 1938-41 American Bantam

Both of these cars were built by the same company in Butler, Penn., and both were high quality products with big-car features in a package that looked like a shrunken full-sized car. The American Austin was built on the English Austin Seven chassis. The body was designed by Count Alexis de Sakhnoffsky and the 75 inch wheelbase roadster was built by Hayes. The manufacturer boasted 40 mpg.

In 1932 the firm went into receivership, but was re-launched as American Bantam (a bantam being a small rooster, which, indeed, was used as the company's logo). Count de Sakhnoffsky did an art deco restyling and a wide range of new models helped the doors to stay open three more years. During World War II, Bantam built the first Jeep, but that's a different story. If you own one of these cars, consider the American Austin-Bantam Club, 714 Maple Dr., Kirkville, NY 13082 or visit www.austinbantam-aabc.com.

The 1,100 to 1,200 pound 13-14HP for \$465 coup (dropping to \$275 in 1933) was a favorite in Hollywood. Among the more notable Austin owners were: Buster Keyton, Al Jolson and the kids from "Our Gang". The Austin was also used in movies such as "International House" and Will Rogers' "A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court".

The art deco styling of the Bantam is a favorite of mine. It reminds me of the Bugattis of that era. Look at the stunning miniature on display in Dave's dining room prepared for his grandchildren. Memories of this nimble four banger in stock form and as the body for those blown sixties dragsters open the pages of my younger years. It's clear that the American Austin shares the same designer but the Bantam has a more streamlined look with the added side cove, molded round rear deck for the spare and a bullet front end. The Bantam Company placed its future on the Army contract for what became the familiar Willys Jeep. Bantam won the contest with its now famous performance in the field. (All others failed entirely.) Their innovative approach rewrote both off-road vehicle construction and requirements for other military vehicles. My racing 1947 Willys CJ2A was a direct descendant. Our government gave the bulk of the Bantam designed (M38A) orders to Ford and Willys insuring huge profits throughout WW II for the failed contestants, meanwhile, only a small quantity was awarded to the winning designer - Bantam. Capital funds expended for the expected orders drained the little company and forced its closure. A true Bantam Jeep is rare today.

My 1957 Chevy Bel Aire hardtop pales next to Bill Harris' restored 57. Perhaps he'll send in a photo and a write up on his piece of history. Will Gary Hirschberg tell us about his hot Mustang convertible or maybe his new Ford pickup? I'd like to hear the stories behind Bud Williams' garage mates. Write to me about your other ride.

AB616 Dropped. Thanks to all who sent letters and email. Senate shelved annual smog test law until next year.

Just ask Phyllis if you would like a free TPOC badge. We urge each of the 91 members to wear them proudly.

Xmas Party plans continue so mark your calendars and invite your guests for the annual blast.

Gondola evening is also scheduled but we need your help selecting a nearby restaurant. Send your suggestions to Bob Singer 714 960-2323.

POCA Presidency Sought by our own Dave Rudderow. Ask him about his platform.

Reminders: from rkunishige@hotmail.com. Please email needed corrections/additions to me.

Sep 12 **TPOC Mtg** 7PM Mimi's 18461 Brookhurst & Ellis FV. I'll be on Maui!

Oct 10 **TPOC Mtg** 7PM Mimi's 18461 Brookhurst & Ellis FV.

- Nov 3-4 **Willow Springs Open Track** sponsored by Jim Saxton 626 285-2024. West Coast Racing invites you to run all makes & models at speed on the Willow Springs road course in Rosamond, just north of Lancaster. Jim and Cherie Saxton host both Pantera and Ferrari clubs for this two day event twice a year. TPOC helps registration Saturday as a fundraiser. So, bring your car and experience the fastest track in the west (often the site of new car testing as seen on Speed TV). The cars are divided into 4 classes based on your skill level from pro to novice (instructors provided) and car preparation. Or, come and make the TPOC treasury grow by helping with the registration and enjoy watching some very fast, expensive cars race. Be sure to offer a ride to the guy holding a helmet labeled with "ROD".
- Nov 14 **TPOC Mtg** 7PM Mimi's 18461 Brookhurst & Ellis FV.
- Dec 9 **Xmas Party** \$40pp for a sure winner. Santa is expected in the same place as last year. Were you nice?
- Dec 29 **Gondola Evening in Naples** Bring your loved one or more for a ride in the canals and then to a dinner at an as yet undisclosed restaurant.



Dave's Little Bugatti



Gary's new Pickup

September

- Escondido - Cruisin' Grand - Grand Ave. Downtown - 5PM - 9PM every Friday April through September
- 13-16 San Bernardino - Route 66 Rendezvous - Downtown -
- 14-16 Costa Mesa - 9th Annual Sand Sports Super Show - Orange County Fairgrounds -
- 15 Eagle Rock - Hot Rod Swap Meet - Eagle Rock Recreation Center - 6AM - 1PM - 323-401-3994 -
- 15 Encinitas - Wavecrest National Woodie Show - Moonlight Beach - 8AM - 3PM -
- 15 Poway - 6th Annual Motor Head Madness - 13933A Poway Rd. - 10AM - 2PM -
- 16 El Mirage - SCTA Land Speed Racing - El Mirage Dry Lake Bed -
- 16 Palos Verdes - Concours d'Elegance - Rolling Hills Country Club -
- 22 Costa Mesa - Cruisin' for a Cure 8 - Orange County Fairgrounds - 7AM - 5PM
- 23 Long Beach - Cycle Show & Swap -
- 29 Long Beach - 3rd Annual Japanese Classic Car Show - Queen Mary -
- 29 Yorba Linda - John Force RaceStation Cruise Night - 22722 Old Canal Rd. - 4- 7PM -
- 30 Temecula - Nifty at Fifty CCI/WCA Western National Convention - Pechanga Resort and Casino -

Belmont Shore was once again a fun place to be. Introducing many to our marque is always rewarding. Some even spoke of their past membership in POCA but, regrettably, I was not able to convince them to rejoin. Steve Wilkinson's Model A Pickup continue to attract large crowds. The mix of cars include ongoing projects some of whom I had a difficult time identifying the various makes of components to very high dollar creations. Be sure to plan to join us next year and see the presentations yourself.