

110 YEARS OF AMERICAN STYLE:

BUICK CELEBRATES ITS ANNIVERSARY WITH A DISPLAY AT THE AACA MUSEUM

By Richard P. Sills

Buick, one of the oldest surviving brands of American automobiles, celebrated its 110th anniversary on May 19, 2013. It is fitting that this milestone occasion is celebrated by a special display, "Beautiful Buicks: 110 Years of American Style", at the AACA Museum in Hershey, PA. The display coincides with Riviera's 50th anniversary, and the AACA Museum's 10th anniversary.

Visitors to the museum are greeted by six Buicks in the lobby, representing the evolution of the marque from horseless carriage to modern high-performance. On the turntables are a 1910 Buick Model 10 Surrey, owned by the Museum and "adopted" by the Mason-Dixon Chapter of BCA, and a 1987 GNX loaned by Buick Heritage Alliance board member Guy Bennett of Wayland, New York.

The GNX is #470 of just 547 produced, and has less than 600 miles since new. It still has the factory-installed plastic covers on the seats and carpets. It was sold new by Mr. Bennett's dealership, which has been selling Buicks continuously since 1922.

Four other Buicks in the lobby of the Museum represent outstanding examples of the marque as it appeared over the years:

1935 Model 96S Sport Coupe, one of 41 produced and believed to be the only known survivor. Resplendent in Ambassador Maroon with tan leather interior, this elegant coupe is equipped with side mounted tires with steel covers and a luggage rack. It is owned by the Bulgari Collection of Allentown, Pennsylvania, and was restored to participate in Buick's centennial celebration in 2003.'

1964 Riviera, Regal Black with red interior, an elegant example of the first generation of Buick's personal luxury car that was a design triumph of Bill Mitchell and Ned Nickles. A unique car that shared its body with no other GM car, this Riviera was loaned for the exhibit by the Brashares Family Foundation, courtesy of Buick Heritage Alliance President Jeff Brashares and his wife Angie, of Marysville, Ohio.

1972 Riviera, a Stratomist Blue beauty with white vinyl top and interior, with bucket seats, console, and Buick chrome wheels, representing the bold "boat-tail" style that made the Riviera distinctive from other cars. This original unrestored beauty is also owned by Guy Bennett.

1975 Century Custom Indy Pace Car Replica with T-tops, commemorating the 59th annual Indy 500 on May 25, 1975. This was the first time Buick paced Indy since 1959. Although different sources give different production figures, the Indy 500 website indicates that only 40 of these replicas were built. This one is also owned by the Brashares Family Foundation.

Two other significant Buicks are featured in the Museum's current exhibit on "Pop Culture and Cars", showcasing the decades of the 1950s, 60s and 70s. This exhibit includes not only the automobiles, but also the iconic memorabilia that reflects the culture of those decades.

Representing the 1960s is a 1967 Buick Sportwagon 400, one of 4,559 produced as a three-seat Custom model. This example, in Champagne Mist with simulated wood trim and Buick chrome wheels, features the raised roof panels framed by tinted glass "skylights" over the cargo and rear seat area. It is owned by Stanley Sipko of Dupont, Pennsylvania.

The zenith of the muscle car era is epitomized by a 1970 GS Stage I, with the potent 360 horsepower 455 cubic inch V-8. This beautiful coupe, in Harvest Gold with white vinyl top and saddle interior, set off by Buick chrome wheels, is from the Brashares Family Foundation.

The Buick cars on display complement two display cases sponsored by the Buick Heritage Alliance, and filled with Buick literature and showroom displays. One case features the 1953 "Golden Anniversary" Buick, and the other celebrates the 20th anniversary of the Riviera in 1983.

Buick Motor Company was founded in Detroit, Michigan, by David Dunbar Buick, and relocated to its long-time home in Flint, Michigan, shortly thereafter. Buick was born in Scotland in 1854, and attained success as an industrialist and an inventor before entering the newly-created auto industry. He developed a successful technique for enameling bathtubs with the permanent white finish that eventually became routine, but his permanent fame resulted from his role as an automotive pioneer. He is credited with developing the "valve-in-head" overhead valve engine that was largely responsible for Buick's early success.

Over 2,000 known brands of cars have been sold in the U.S.A., but only a very few survive. Just one -- Cadillac -- predates Buick, by less than a year. (As an historical note, one may trace Buick history back to 1899 by considering its predecessor, the Buick Auto-Vim and Power Company. Two prototype vehicles were produced between 1899 and 1902.) Ford shares its 1903 "birthday" with Buick, but the Ford Motor Company was formed on June 16, 1903, 28 days after Buick.

Buick can also claim to be the foundation of General Motors. The profits produced from its successful sales enabled Buick's then-President, William C. Durant, to create General Motors in 1908.

The 110th Anniversary exhibit will remain at the AACA Museum through October 13, 2013, in time to be viewed by the hobbyists from all over the world who convene in Hershey for the AACA National Fall Meet. For more information on the AACA Museum, visit www.aacamuseum.org or call 717-566-7100. For more information on the Buick Heritage Alliance, visit www.buickheritagealliance.org.

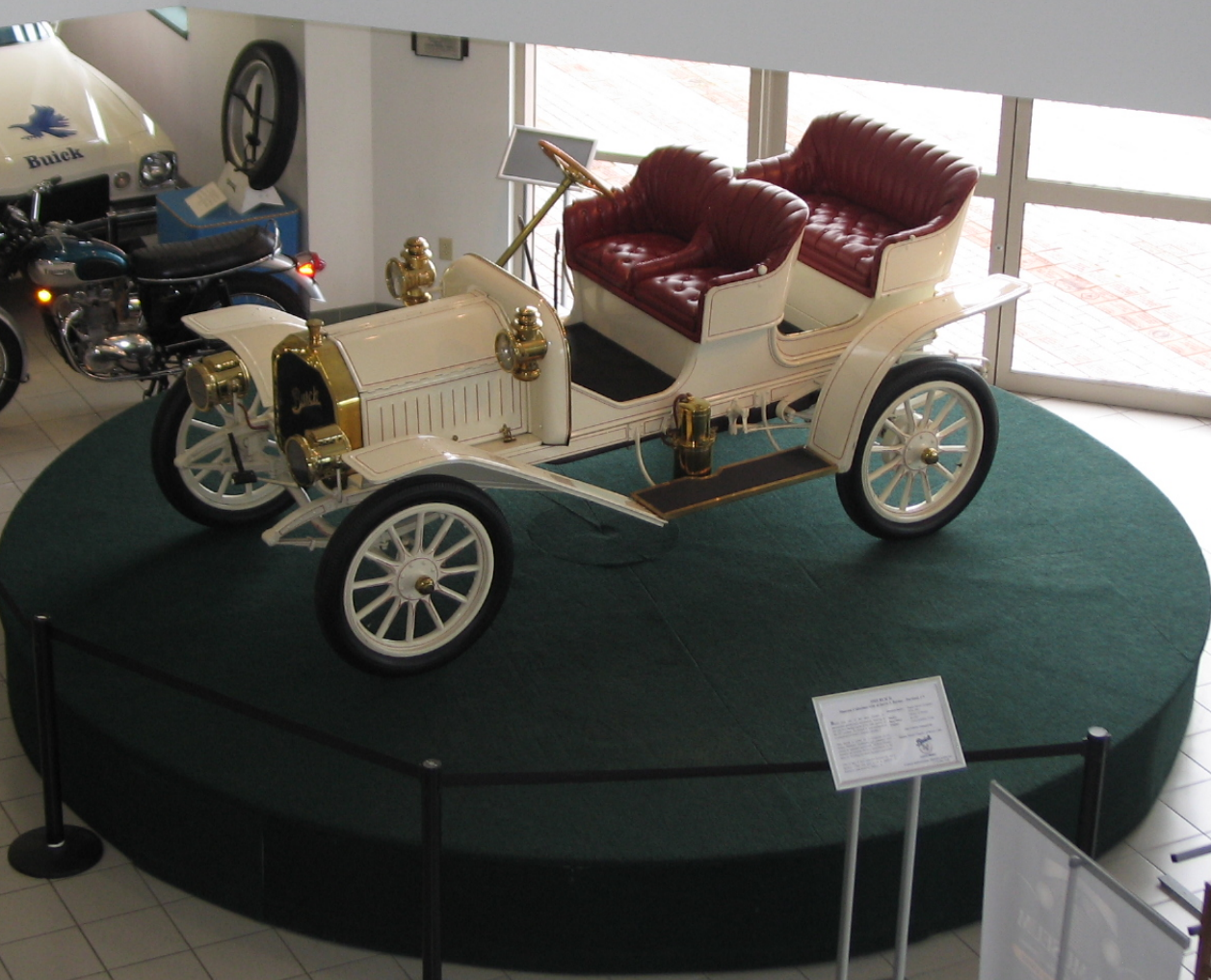


Informational placard on the left side of the car.

Informational placard on the right side of the car.

Mustang





ROTUNDA

