

Times of Change

The Ebb and Flow of Publishing



Looking back on 25 years of publishing *Car Collector*, so much has changed in that quarter century it is difficult even for me to comprehend what has happened since 1978. And I was there, albeit with *Car Classics* before the two titles merged. Looking back on those days in the late 1970s, it was a much less complicated, more clearly defined time, not only for publishing and the automotive hobby, but also for life in general. An entire generation has come of age since we started this magazine and the collector car hobby has gone through some remarkable changes. And change, in the end, is something of a compromise.

There was a time when a car built after 1948 was a rare find in these pages, and of course, muscle cars weren't even considered. Today, collectors are paying more for a restored Plymouth Hemi 'Cuda convertible than for a 1930 Cadillac sixteen cylinder phaeton. It's still a little hard to imagine, even when you're sitting in the front row of an auction watching it happen. But now the sons, and even grandsons, of many of the collectors I knew in the 1970s are involved in the hobby, and each brings a new perspective and different tastes. Interestingly, it has had a kind of retro effect, too, as older collectors are leaning toward later cars as well.

To many traditionalists, and some long associated with this publication, this is blasphemy and *Car Collector* appears to have sold out its classic heritage for a brand of cars that weren't even considered collectible 25 years ago. Still, the content of this issue, like most throughout the year, is well divided between these converging eras in automotive history. When we look at the Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance, we see that the great cars of the 1930s still reign, yet on the same field are antique and vintage cars, some dating back more than 90 years, postwar sports and racing cars of significance, and even a class for woodies. There is room on the 18th fairway of the Pebble Beach Lodge for cars of all eras, and there should be room for them in this publication as well.

These are, however, different times and as the collector car hobby broadens, we, as publishers and editors of the hobby's leading publication, have to follow

the ebb and flow in order to stay current with trends. More collectors are driving their cars than ever, more events have tours prior to the concours judging, there are more road rallies, vintage sports car events, and certainly, many more collector car auctions than at any time in the last quarter century. Thus, it falls on our staff to keep abreast of the changes, and in so doing our format must also follow suit. This began in 2003 with Rick Carey and "Auction Forum" and our increased coverage of major regional Concours.

This issue marks another turning point for *Car Collector* as we begin our 26th year. December will be the last issue for three of our longtime columns, Bud Juneau's "Commercially Speaking," Carl Bomstead's "Automobilia," and Lawrence Savell's "Old Cars In Law." All three authors will remain with *Car Collector*, writing about their areas of expertise in expanded feature articles throughout the coming year. Readers can also expect to see even more event coverage in 2004 and a greater emphasis on significant American and European marques from the turn of the last century through the 1970s.

There's a fine line between tradition and innovation, a line many American and European automakers such as Buick, Cadillac, Chevrolet, Oldsmobile, Chrysler, Lincoln, Ford, Jaguar and Mercedes-Benz, among other surviving historic marques, must walk to appease their older customers and their children and even grandchildren. It is the same line we walk every month in *Car Collector* and I hope each and every one of you will continue with us on that journey.

On behalf of our publisher Jeff Broadus and myself, the entire *Car Collector* staff extends their best wishes to our readers and their families for a happy holiday season.