



This 1956 Series 62 convertible is owned by Jerome Gross of Maryland.

Cadillac Dream Car Meet

A very special gathering in Maryland

BY DAVID W. TEMPLE ■ ON OCTOBER 25-26, CADILLAC ENTHUSIASTS FROM 10 STATES FLOCKED TO CAPITOL CADILLAC IN GREENBELT, MARYLAND, FOR A UNIQUE SHOW SPONSORED BY THE POTOMAC REGION OF THE CADILLAC & LASALLE CLUB.

Two cars on display inside the showroom that grabbed the most attention were the 1953 LeMans models, of which four were built and only nos. 3 and 4 still exist. No. 3 is known to have been shown around the country and Canada into 1954. It was originally painted the same color as the others, silver-blue, but was repainted “Apollo Yellow,” which is the color it wore at the 1954 Canadian National Exhibition. In June 1955, GM sold LeMans no. 3 to Cadillac distributor Floyd Akers, owner of Capital Cadillac, then located in Washington, D.C. The car was made functional through the addition of a wiring harness and real instrumentation. Furthermore, its suspension was modified to increase the ground clearance to comply with the city’s regulation. Akers’ daughter, Toma

Jean, drove the car, adding thousands of miles over several years to the former show car. When Suburban Cadillac, also owned by Akers, was sold to Coleman Cadillac, this LeMans went with the sale. It sat inside the showroom there for some time before being purchased by Scott Milestone, the car’s current owner today.

The fourth LeMans, now owned by GM, was built for Fisher Body president J.E. Goodman much later in the model year. This car was restyled for Goodman under the direction of GM Styling head Harley Earl. Modifications included alterations to the fins and taillights as well as lowering the hood and cowl; quad headlights were also part of the redo. Mechanical systems were updated to 1959 specs, which included a 1959

Cadillac 390ci V-8. As a result of these changes to LeMans no. 4 a half century ago, LeMans no. 3 is apparently the only example to retain its original bodywork.

Sitting in the middle of the contemporary and bygone-era show cars was the oldest known surviving Cadillac, a resplendent 1903 Model A. It was a striking contrast to the others – Cadillac’s mid-engine 2002 V-12 Cien and the company’s 2003 Sixteen, named for its 1,000hp V-16 engine.

In another area of Capitol Cadillac’s showroom was the 1956 Maharani, a Fleetwood Sixty-Special modified for the 1956 GM Motorama tour. It is also known less glamorously as the “kitchen sink car.” It featured an Eastern motif; its rear seat was upholstered in a deep red silk-like fabric and plastic with a unique print. Up front was a leather-covered seat for the driver only, as the space to the right was occupied by a safe-deposit box, safe, refrigerator, cutlery, toaster,



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1 Four Cadillacs from the GM Heritage Collection were brought to Capitol Cadillac, including this 1903 Model A. It is believed to be the world's oldest surviving Cadillac.

2 LeMans number four was built for the president of Fisher Body, J.E. Goodman. His initials are engraved on the center of the steering wheel. Its bodywork was modified in late 1958 or early 1959 under the direction of GM Styling head, Harley Earl.

3 In another area of Capitol Cadillac's showroom was the 1956 Cadillac Maharani; it was built from a Fleetwood Sixty-Special for the 1956 GM Motorama tour. Among its many interesting and unusual features are a sink, cutlery, toaster, and a safe.

4 The 2002 Cadillac Cien, an impressive V-12 concept car, made an appearance at Capitol Cadillac along with three other cars from GM's Heritage Collection.

5 The Class B (1927-40 LaSalle) first-place trophy was awarded to Roger Bentley for his 1940 LaSalle Special Series 5229 five-passenger convertible sedan. According to the sign displayed with the car, it may have originally belonged to actor Gary Cooper.

6 A major attraction of the CLC show was this 1953 LeMans dream car, the third of four built. After GM no longer needed it for show duty, the car was sold to Floyd Akers, owner of Capitol Cadillac, in June 1955. The LeMans is now owned by Scott Milestone.

and a sink with a faucet. Water was supplied through tanks mounted under the hood. For some time it was owned by well-known dream car collector Joe Bortz. Currently, it is owned by Joshua Modlinger of New York.

On Saturday evening, local and out-of-town members were treated to a dinner followed by an invitation-only reception to preview the cars at Capitol Cadillac. A car show was held on the lot of the dealership the following day; there were plenty of sparkling Cadillacs and LaSalle's to be seen and many won awards, including a 1936 V-12 Series 85 convertible sedan owned by

Byron and Alida Alsop that received the Class A (1902-42 Cadillac) first-place and Best of Show Overall trophies. Class B (1927-40 LaSalle) first-place was awarded to Roger Bentley for his 1940 LaSalle Special Series 5229 five-passenger convertible sedan. Best Pre-War and Class J commercial class awards both went to Tom Smith for his 1941 Series 75 limousine, while Best Post-War went to Richard Sisson for his 1954 Eldorado, which also won the Class C (1946-58 Cadillac) first-place trophy. Past CLC president Richard Sills hosted the awards ceremony, which was followed with brief lectures about

the history of the four LeMans show cars by long-time CLC member Charles D. Barnette and the author.

Capitol Cadillac is now operated by Daniel Jobe, the grandson of Floyd Akers; the company was established in Washington, D.C., in 1934. It has been a part of Cadillac's history ever since, and the gathering there in October is yet another historic occasion for this long-lived dealership.

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