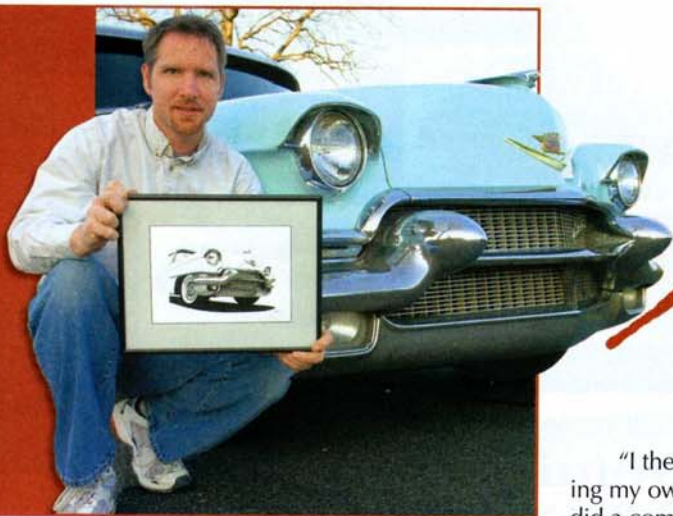


By Mark J. McCourt



DAN REED

**While the natural talent** that some artists exhibit seems to have come out of thin air, others know exactly from where theirs originated. Dan Reed can trace his interest and eye for fine art to his grandfather, George Scirrotto. "My brothers and I are all close in age, and when we were little kids, we were all influenced by what he did," Dan recalls. "He was an amateur artist who painted scenes in and around his native Philadelphia, and we would sit there on the floor around him, drawing with scratch paper and pencils. It was a natural progression for all of us to become artists."

Dan attended West Chester University in Pennsylvania, where he earned a degree in graphic design. Fine art wasn't his first career, though; working his way through school, Dan got a job as a mechanical testing technician. He found himself enjoying the steady paycheck and benefits that this position offered, and spent the next 12 years working his way up through the company. "About six years ago, I dreamed of pursuing art full-time. The company went through some layoffs, and although they didn't affect me, I realized I wasn't as secure as I thought," he recounts.

"I then began working towards starting my own business, and every time I did a commissioned work, I'd invest the proceeds into it. I made a deal with car clubs in which I'd donate back to them a portion of the commissions I earned from their members, in exchange for advertising space in their club newsletters; it had a snowball effect," Dan remembered. "I started bringing samples of my work to the car shows I'd attend, and I got even more commissions. I started treating the artwork more like a business, and rather than saying 'Someday,' I decided to make it a full-time venture. I've been doing this full-time for a year and a half, and I've got a back-log of work!"

Although Dan's commissions have included architectural projects and animals, his first loves are creating railroad scenes and automobile artwork. "I've always been interested in classic cars. I've doodled cars for years, and I later used the techniques I learned in art school to draw them," he says, and got plenty of practice with his own; "A buddy had to sell his old 1964 Cadillac, so I bought it. I joined the local Cadillac club, and kept that car for a few years. About seven years ago, I replaced it with the 1956 Cadillac I have now—the '56 is more my style, and I love cars of the 1950s.

"I've always liked the realistic, or photo-realism style of tightly detailed renderings," Dan explains. "I have strived to

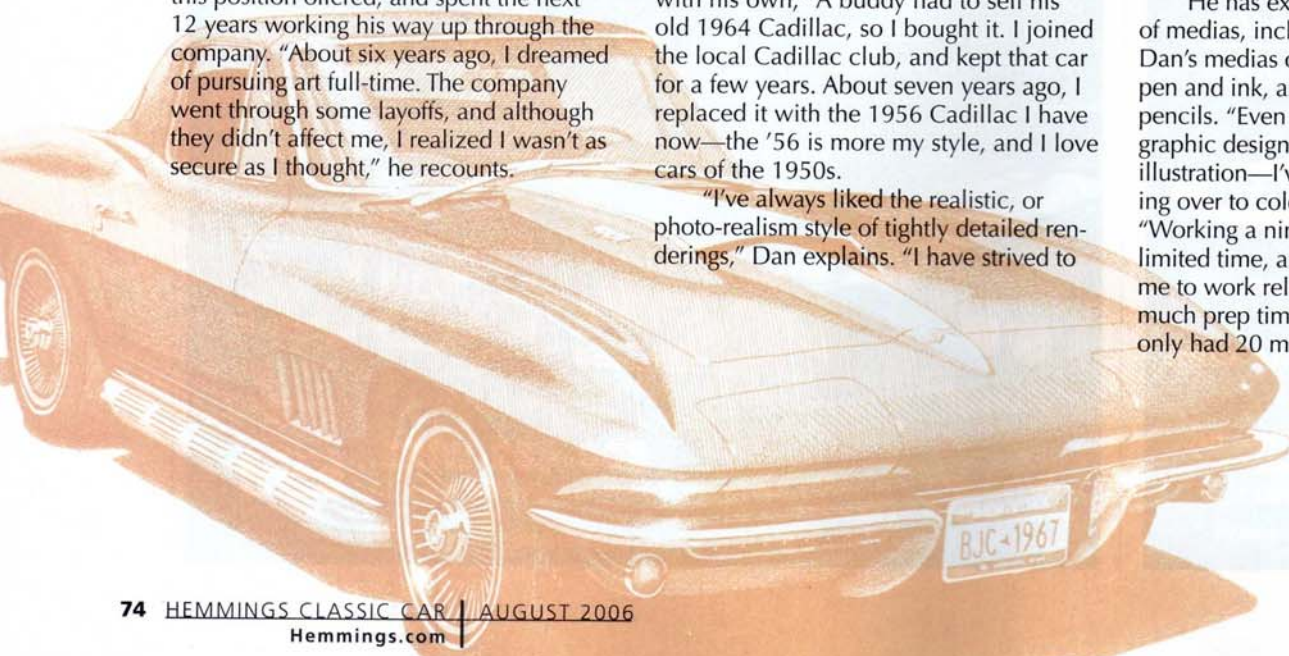


### 1937 Cadillac

*"This 1937 Cadillac was photographed by the owner in front of this old Shell station. I did take some artistic license by moving the car back a few feet so the first gas pump could be seen entirely. The owner also wanted to include the 'Cadillac Official Service' sign hanging from the station's roof."*

get the proportions right, and this is a style that I'm known for."

He has experimented with a number of medias, including oil on canvas, but Dan's medias of choice are the traditional pen and ink, and most unusually, colored pencils. "Even though I was trained in graphic design, I've always gravitated to illustration—I've just transferred painting over to colored pencils," he explains. "Working a nine-to-five job left me with limited time, and colored pencils allowed me to work relatively quickly without much prep time and clean up...even if I only had 20 minutes, I could devote 100







### 1929 Duesenberg

*"One of my favorite illustrations to date, this 1929 Duesenberg was commissioned last year by the owner. This is the first in a series of two illustrations that will be created featuring this car."*

percent of that time to working. Not knowing better, I tried to get the same effect with colored pencils as I would oil painting, with some success. It's a great medium."

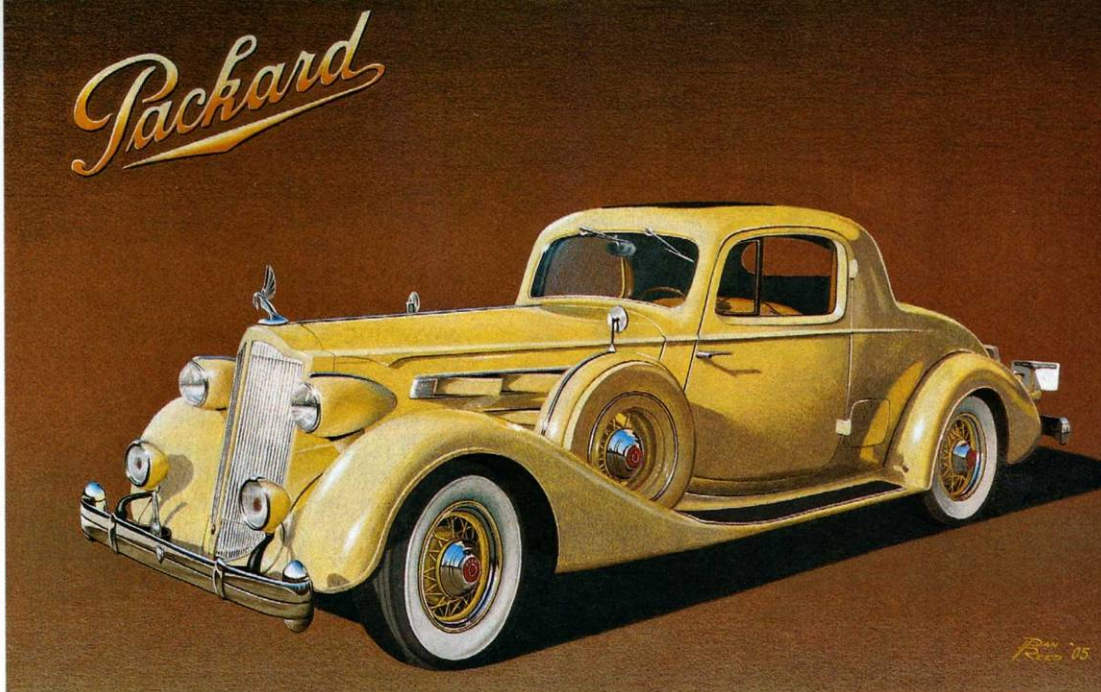
Whatever Dan's choice of medium, he uses a number of photographs to help him establish the correct proportions and details of his subjects; he can take artistic license with a background if requested, explaining that because he starts with a blank sheet of paper, anything is possible. With pen and ink pieces, he uses ultra-fine Rapidograph pens on bristol board; with colored pencil pieces, he works with Prismacolor-brand pencils on Canson MI-Tientes Paper or mat board, smoothing the finished work with Colorless Blender.

Dan was recently contacted by noted automotive fine artist Tom Hale (HCC #5), who is a fan of his artwork and was intrigued to learn that most of his pieces feature colored pencils. "He said that this is a rare medium, and he recommended that I schedule commissions further apart so that I get time to do more original works," Dan says excitedly. "This gives me something to work towards—I can take original pieces to competitions, and perhaps this will someday lead to being invited into the Automotive Fine Arts Society. No matter how long I've been doing this, I look at Tom, and Ken Eberts, and I'm still amazed at their work, at what can be done. I love seeing different artists' vantage points and interpretations. I would love to earn that respect from my peers and from the automotive world—what more could I possibly ask for?"

### Contact

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*Packard*



### 1936 Packard

*"A friend and fellow member of the Cadillac-La Salle Club had been talking about having me create artwork of one of his classic automobiles. Last year he chose to have his 1936 Packard immortalized."*



### 1955 Cadillac

*"The owner of this 1955 Cadillac wanted three elements incorporated in the artwork—the car, its matching luggage set and his house. I have a tutorial on my Web site showing how I developed this illustration using Prismacolor colored pencils."*



### 1951 Mercury

*"I met the owner of this 1951 Mercury in Atlantic City in February, 2006. He liked the idea of focusing on the car without a specific background, and incorporating the '51 Merc hood emblem into the artwork."*

### 1937 La Salle

*"Keeping quite busy with commission work has one drawback—I rarely get to create artwork for myself. Back in January, I managed to squeeze this pen and ink rendering of a 1937 La Salle into my schedule."*

LASALLE

