

Legacy of LaSalle 1927-2007

BY SANDY KEMPER/PHOTOS BY DAN REED, SANDY KEMPER, AKSEL OLESEN, RON VANGELDEREN AND EZEKIEL ARMSTRONG

In Sunday, Oct. 28, 2007, the CLC Potomac Region held another one of its impressive annual theme-based car shows at Capitol Cadillac in Greenbelt, Md.

The theme, Legacy of LaSalle: 1927-2007, celebrated the 80th anniversary of Cadillac's companion car, LaSalle. And LaSalle owners from New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Virginia and Maryland joined the celebration by traveling to the Washington, D.C., suburbs to create one of the largest gatherings of LaSalle's in many years.

Planning for this remarkable event began nearly a year ago through the efforts of Potomac Region Director Vince Taliano, assisted by Richard Sills, past national president of the CLC and the Cadillac-

LaSalle Club Museum & Research Center, with the generous support of Daniel Jobe, owner of Capitol Cadillac.

CLC members came from as far away as California and Georgia to participate in the weekend festivities that included Sunday's car show and a Saturday night dinner arranged by Shelley Chadick and Richard Sills at the nearby host hotel.

The oldest LaSalle in the show was a 1928 303 Cabriolet owned by Wes and Mary Ann Waters of Havertown, Pa. Of note, this car bears the CLC Senior badge No. 1—the first CLC Senior badge ever issued. It was issued at the 1985 Grand National in Valley Forge, Pa.

The other end of the LaSalle production run was illustrated in the show by six 1940 LaSalle's, including Mike and Vicky

Baruzza's Series 52 Special Coupe and two Series 52 Special Sedans. The Special Sedans were premium models offered by LaSalle and both cars at the show were good examples. One is owned by Jim Scheidel of Dunkirk, Md., and the other by Frank Lindberg of Halethorpe, Md.

There was a convertible sedan owned by J. Roger Bentley of Brinklow, Md. It is one of only 75 produced, making it one of the rarest of all LaSalle's. And there were two Series 50 Touring Sedans: one was a first-prize winner at the recent Grand National in Savannah, Ga., for its owners, Bud and Barbara Coleman of Malvern, Pa., and the other was driven to the show by John and Karen Barry from Wenonah, N.J., a distance of more than 120 miles!

One 1940 LaSalle, owned by Clint and Dana Dalton of Norfolk, Va., began the journey to Greenbelt, Md., but the LaSalle began running poorly during the last 30 miles and limped into the hotel parking lot late Saturday evening. Things did not get better, as the car would not start Sunday morning. Past Potomac Region Director Bill Sessler and I agreed to leave our posts at the show to help the Daltons and their wounded LaSalle. It was a true demonstration of the camaraderie that exists in the Cadillac & LaSalle Club.

The 1930s were represented by one 1938 Series 50 Coupe, a solid car, regularly driven by Bill Sessler and his late father for many years; and two 1935

HISTORIC CAPITOL CADILLAC in Greenbelt, Md. was the site of the Potomac Region's latest event focusing on a specific era or cars. The '07 "Legacy of LaSalle" focused on Cadillac's companion car produced from 1927 through 1940.



Series 50 Convertible Coupes (both owned by Randy and Susan Denchfield, of Chevy Chase, Md.—proving that one can't have too much of a good thing!) Also three 1939 LaSalles, including a Series 50 Convertible Coupe, a car that has resided on both coasts, but now lives with J. Roger Bentley in Maryland; a Series 50 Sedan that has been owned by Lou Harrington of Rockville, Md., since 1972 and still sports 90 percent of its original paint; and a Series 50 Sedan owned by automotive journalist Vern Parker, who writes the "Out of the Past" column for *The Washington Times* and other newspapers.

There were five 1937 LaSalles, including two Series 50 four-door Touring Sedans. One is owned by Aksel Olesen of Potomac, Md., who claims that this fine car is still a work-in-progress, even though it has won a number of awards. The other was shown by Andy and Andrea Jacoby of Huntingdon Valley, Pa., who bought the car in 1995 in pieces and spent the last 12 years finishing its restoration.

There was a Series 50 Coupe whose owner, Marshall England of Richmond, Va., was dressed in a shirt matching the color of the coupe. And there was a Convertible Coupe owned by Bill Surgner of Berwyn, Pa., and purchased by his mother as a two-year-old used car in 1939 for \$400. The remaining 1937 LaSalle was a Series 50 Convertible Sedan, the first year one was offered by LaSalle. This car is owned by the Cadillac-LaSalle Club Museum & Research Center.

Under the skillful direction of Henry Ruby, Potomac Region Car Show co-coordinator, 10 of the LaSalles present were maneuvered into the Capitol Cadillac showroom. Somehow he found room to include Jerry Parnes' 1937 Series



FRANK LINDBERG of Halethorpe, Pa., came to the festivities with his 1940 Series 52 "Special" Sedan.

70 Fleetwood Convertible Sedan, Tom and Cathy Myers' 1939 Series 6119 Sedan, Pete Sanders' 1930 V-16 Madame X Town Sedan, and Jim and Brenda George's 1932 V-12 Convertible Coupe. It's likely that 10 LaSalles haven't been in a dealer showroom for more than 60 years.

Outside, Potomac Region Car Show display and parking managers Derrick Fisher and Jim Govoni expertly guided seven more LaSalles onto the apron surrounding the front of the dealership. Then they filled the last available spaces on the building apron with several other fine examples from "Clark Avenue," including George and Rita Boxley's 1940 Series 75 Sedan and Mark Brodsky's 1959 Coupe de Ville.

The remaining LaSalle present, the 1940 Series 52 Special Coupe, is a "project" car owned by Mike and Vicki Baruzza. Also present were Byron Alsop's 1936 V-12 Convertible Sedan, Bart

Mitchell's 1953 Eldorado and William Jackson's 1936 Series 60 Sedan, along with Daniel Jobe's 1967 Eldorado and 1973 Eldorado Indy Pace Car.

Among the LaSalles and other fine Cadillacs mentioned already were many other excellent automobiles. There were two pristine 1964 Eldorados, Dave Ciccarella's and Al Cowling's, both driven from Pennsylvania, albeit different parts of the state. Their companion on the show field was the first-rate 1964 Eldorado of Potomac Region Activities Director Steven Sisson. Also in attendance was an exquisite, low-mileage 1976 Eldorado convertible owned by Harry Goins and Rusty Saville's superb 1973 Coupe de Ville.

Once all of the Cadillacs and LaSalles were in their parking spaces, there were 90 cars on display. By numbers alone, this was a successful show. Moreover, the presence of so many LaSalles and the quality of all of the Cadillac products was an outstanding spectacle.

To celebrate this event, each show



◀ **DANIEL JOBE**, the owner of Capitol Cadillac, poses in a showroom filled with vintage LaSalles and Cadillacs. Mr. Jobe is an enthusiastic supporter of the Region and as Vince Taliano says, "If every Region had a Dan Jobe, (or knew how to cultivate one), the CLC would have 10,000 members." Many thanks to Mr. Jobe!

participant received a commemorative dash plaque displaying an illustration of a LaSalle, deftly designed by artist and CLC member Dan Reed. Additionally, they were given a commemorative show program developed by Vince Taliano, which highlighted the history of LaSalle, drafted by Richard Sills, and featuring a description of each LaSalle preregistered for the show written by the owners themselves.

The ambiance of the show was enhanced by musical entertainment provided by Mike Veilleux of Music Madness from Brunswick, Md., who played period music and read historical facts from the years 1927–1940. “DJ Mikey” even brought a turntable to play some of the vintage music to give it that authentic crackling sound. Many people in attendance commented that the music was a great touch.

Also adding to the atmosphere were those participants dressed in period clothing. No one was more suited for the event than J. Roger Bentley, who looked absolutely dapper in his period tuxedo.

Adding to the very special climate



THE 1935 LASSALLE CONVERTIBLE COUPE belonging to Randy and Susan Denchfield made a welcome appearance.

surrounding this show were some notable guests. Fred Bausch is the CLC’s Western Region vice president, as well as the vice president of the Cadillac-LaSalle Club Museum & Research Center and is from the San Francisco Bay Area.

There were other members of the national CLC board in attendance: Jack Noll, who represents the Central Pennsylvania Region, and his wife, Pat; Bob Crimmins, from the Raritan River Region, who is also the CLC’s Chapter liaison; the Potomac Region’s own Bill Sessler; and Jack McClow, who was the

registrar of the 2007 Grand National Meet in Savannah.

Also present was Jack Hotz, the national deputy chief judge and the chairman of the 2008 Grand National Meet in Cherry Hill, N.J. Jack and his wife, Nancy, as well as Bud and Barbara Coleman are the first families of LaSalle—Jack is the director of the CLC LaSalle Appreciation Society (LAS), Bud is the assistant director, Barbara is the treasurer and Nancy is the editor of the Chapter’s award-winning publication, *Sallee Speaks*. They presented a special gift to Daniel Jobe to show the LAS’ appreciation for hosting this special event.

Perhaps the most notable guest for a show featuring LaSalle’s and for the Potomac Region was Ron VanGelder. Ron is known as an expert on LaSalle’s and is co-author along with Matt Larson of the book, “LaSalle—Cadillac’s Companion Car.” This book is the definitive reference book on the LaSalle. Furthermore, Ron is a past national president of the CLC and a director of the Cadillac-LaSalle Club Museum & Research Center. But, most importantly

NEVER CHANGE POINTS AGAIN!

IGNITOR
PERTRONIX

Solid State Electronic Breakerless Ignition System

For Your Cadillac

- Fast starts, every time • Improves fuel economy
- Eliminates minor tuneups • 6 or 12 volt
- 30 month factory warranty

1932-1955 \$99 1956-1974 \$79



Flame-Thrower™

\$39

40,000 volt

High Performance Coil

OEM BLACK OR CHROME

Give Us A Call

800-685-1492

www.cbsperformance.com

SATISFACTION GUARANTEED

FREE SHIPPING

CBS

Performance Automotive

52 County Road 5 • Divide, CO 80814





WORLD CLASS CADILLAC RESTORATIONS

Whether it's a reliable daily driver or a Concours grade champion, Old Coach Works will deliver more than an exquisite finished project. You'll drive home with a cherished accomplishment, *with a personality all its own!*

- ✓ Breathtaking attention to detail
- ✓ Unprecedented communication
- ✓ Extraordinary customer service
- ✓ Old world, hand crafted workmanship



OLD COACH WORKS

RESTORATIONS, INC

www.oldcoachworks.com

NORTH CENTRAL ILLINOIS • 630-553-0414



from the local perspective, Ron is also a co-founder of the Potomac Region.

No Potomac Region car show would be complete without Richard Sills as master of ceremonies. Richard conducted the awards ceremony, which included two noteworthy features befitting the uniqueness of the LaSalle. First, all of the owners of the featured LaSallees were recognized, asked to come before the gathering and presented with framed certificates of appreciation. In addition, a copy of the book, "LaSalle—Cadillac's Companion Car," which had been donated by Bentley and autographed by both VanGelderren and his co-author Larson, was given away in a drawing among all show registrants. The lucky recipient was Hugh Snider of Linwood, N.C.

VanGelderren then addressed the crowd with commentary about LaSallees, the CLC and that other car, Cadillac. (Ron had been a "V-16 guy" who fell for the LaSalle when he recognized the role that LaSalle played as Cadillac's styling leader.) Following Ron's remarks, Richard Sills announced the winners of the show's People's Choice ballots.

However, the real winners of the Legacy of LaSalle: 1927–2007 car show were all of us who got the opportunity to see so many fine examples of these rare and highly styled cars. ■

Sandy Kemper is a CLC and Potomac Region member from Silver Spring, Md.

▲ **A COMPLETE SET** of LaSalle tools was displayed in front of the 1928 303 Cabriolet belonging to Wes and Mary Waters of Haver-town, Pa. Note golf clubs at extreme left.

▶ **A TUXEDOED** J. Roger Bentley of Brinklow, Md., strikes an informal pose next to his rare (only 75 made) 1940 5229 5P Torpedo Convertible Sedan.

▼ **THE 1937 CADILLAC** 5P Convertible Sedan belonging to Bill Surgner of Berwyn, Pa., was a standout in a sea of LaSallees.

