

MUSEUMS & EXHIBITIONS



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The unordinary is often the extraordinary – as is the case with the Lane Motor Museum in Nashville, Tennessee. No other museum in the United States is as dedicated to preservation and enjoyment of the kind of cars that make even the most die-hard enthusiast scratch his head and try to figure out what they are.

Imagine walking through doors that lead to an open 40,000 square foot exhibit space filled with over 150 unique cars and motorcycles from all over the world, most of which aren't surrounded by barriers. You've just walked into Lane Motor Museum – a different kind of U.S. car museum filled with predominantly European vehicles, many of which are very obscure. Visitors often see vehicles they never even knew existed, as the museum is filled with Tattras from Czechoslovakia, odd German amphibious vehicles, and tiny three-wheelers from England.

Founded by car enthusiast Jeff Lane and his wife Susan, Lane Motor Museum opened its doors in October 2003 wanting to share “Unique Cars from A to Z.”

Like so many of us, Jeff Lane had gears in his head and oil in his blood from an early age. His grandfather sold Fords in a rural Michigan town and his father started an automotive supply business, so it came as no surprise when Jeff shared his family's passion. When Lane was just 12 years old, his father gave him a 1955 MG TF – a dream come true other than the fact that the once elegant British sports car was loaded up in cardboard boxes. The elder Lane challenged his son that if he could put the TF together, the car would be his. Lane worked on the TF for several years and eventually passed his driver's license exam in it. This MG TF is included on the exhibit floor today. Lane continued his MG enthusiasm by racing MG Midgets in SCCA competition.

The collection continued to grow with an MG TC, a massive Dodge M37 truck and, when Lane really jumped into the enthusiast pool, a Maserati-powered Citroën SM. After graduating with a degree in mechanical engineering from Vanderbilt University, he began collecting in earnest. His collection concentrated on European cars that were technically significant or uniquely different from the mainstream Fords and Chevrolets that prowled the streets of Nashville. He found cars

Top: The bubble-shaped McQuay-Norris promotional vehicle draws as many looks today as it did back in 1934.

Center: Not a cartoon car, this two-headed Citroën 2CV was actually used by a French fire department for search and rescue missions.

Bottom: A rare and increasingly popular Tatra T-87; the Lane example sees considerable use today, just like nearly everything else in the museum.





Top: The Lane collection employs few barriers between vehicles and visitors are invited to inspect cars up close.

Bottom: This collection consists of drivers, not just show cars; the museum staff regularly exercises the collection on local roads.

that made people smile and in no time, he had outgrown his own garage. In 2002, his personal collection mad up the donation that established the Lane Motor Museum foundation. The museum is a not-for-profit organization that aims to share in the mission of collecting and preserving unique automotive history for future generations. Its collection of tiny and often obscure European cars is, quite simply, unparalleled on these shores.

The museum was developed in a well-known Nashville landmark, the former Sunbeam Bread Bakery. For many years, the facility was the largest and most modern bakery in the area. The 50 year-old building has since been outfitted for the museum's needs but left with many of its original characteristics and has a high-ceiling, natural light, and hand-crafted brick and maple flooring. The architecture simply complements the collection.

The majority of the collection is arranged on the exhibit floor by country – Austria, Czechoslovakia, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, Sweden, and the United States. Various flags from these countries hang over corresponding vehicles in the collection. The largest collection of Czechoslovakian cars outside of Europe, propeller-powered vehicles, microcars, amphibious vehicles, competition cars, alternative fuel vehicles, military vehicles, motorcycles, one-of-a-kind vehicles, and prototypes.

Cars in the collection range in age from an open-top, 0.8-liter straight-4 1924 Citroën 5CV Trefle to a showroom-new 2003 Smart – added to the museum long before the announcement that Roger Penske would distribute the cars in the U.S. beginning in 2008.

Many of the American cars in the collection are unique prototypes or one-of-a-kind vehicles, like the bubble-shaped 1934 McQuay Norris – one of 6 promotional vehicles for the McQuay-Norris company, a manufacturer of replacement pistons, rings, bearings, and other automotive related parts. The silver vehicle vaguely resembles the famous A.L.F.A. (pre-Romeo) 40/60 Aerodinamica. The McQuay Norris cars traveled extensively across the U.S. and Canada to demonstrate how well the piston rings and valves were sealing, but were never produced for sale.

Another rare American car in the collection is the one-of-a-kind 1946 Hewson Rocket. Built with a very aerodynamic shape with no projections anywhere, William Hewson

planned to produce the Rocket, and sell it for \$1,000, but his capital was depleted by the time the car's body was finished. Named the "Winner of the Class – 75th Anniversary of the Ubiquitous Ford Flat-Head V-8" at the Goodwood Festival of Speed in England, the Hewson Rocket is a significant part of the collection.

More than 150 unique cars and motorcycles are displayed at one time – but the collection contains over 350 total vehicles. Cars are regularly rotated to keep the exhibit floor fresh for returning guests and exhibits featuring certain marques will be displayed and rotated. The collection extends beyond cars that would normally fall under the enthusiast realm to workhorse rarities like a 1952 Citroën Cogolin (2-headed 2CV) and a 1974 Faun Kraka. The Citroën Cogolin is a replica of a French reconnaissance vehicle used by a fire and rescue service in Cogolin, France. Often unable to traverse down narrow, blocked mountain roads, the idea came about for a 2-headed car that could drive in either direction. Thus, the Citroën Cogolin was created by welding 2 – 2CVs front ends together. The 1974 Faun Kraka is a German military vehicle designed to be folded in half and parachuted down into battle and is a part of the extensive collection of military vehicles on display.

Bordering on just plain peculiar, a 1932 Helicron propeller-driven vehicle, joined the Lane collection after being found in a barn in France. The vehicle has undergone restoration at the museum and is a favorite to rally around the streets of Nashville traveling at speeds of up to 40 miles per hour. The Helicron was a 2007 winner of the "People's Choice Award" at the Ault Park Concours d'Elegance held in Cincinnati, Ohio, but it's not the easiest vehicle to drive: drivers and passengers have to wear goggles as bugs and oil fly toward the exposed passengers at speed.

A bright red Peel P50 represents more conventional automotive travel – but on a very small scale. At a mere 250 pounds, the Peel P50 is certainly the world's smallest ever passenger car. Each of the 50 P50s was hand built on the Isle of Man. The P50 has no reverse gear, but has a "reversing handle" located

This Page: What collection of small cars would be complete without at least one Mini? This extraordinarily rare 1969 Austin Mini, one of several in the museum's collection, is an original cabriolet converted by a third party.





on the back of the car. The driver simply picked up the back end and moved the car to the desired position. The Peel P50 is joined by two other Peels in the collection, a 1965 Peel Trident three-wheeler, and a squat, BMC Mini-based 1964 Peel Viking.

But the collection isn't just about tiny, obscure cars. A 1936 Voisin C28, one of 61 produced, anchors the museum's more elegant side. The art deco Type C28 "Ambassade" was the last model manufactured under Gabriel Voisin's attentive watch. Its low-slung burgundy body simply exudes French elegance.

The Lane collection's vehicles are kept road-worthy whenever possible. The museum holds a number of events throughout the year and vehicles from the collection are given regular workouts. Yet the cars do often appear at large Concours events throughout the country – an exceedingly rare 1947 Tatra T-87 has been a darling of the show scene recently, but the car also competed in the grueling, 4,000-mile 2005 Great Race. The aerodynamic T-87 remains one of the most comfortable vehicles ever produced.

In order to keep all of these vehicles running and operations' running smoothly, the museum has seven full-time staff that includes a restoration specialist and automotive preparation manager. Often, the museum staff will drive the cars hundreds of miles to shows and events, rather than haul the vehicles on trailers.

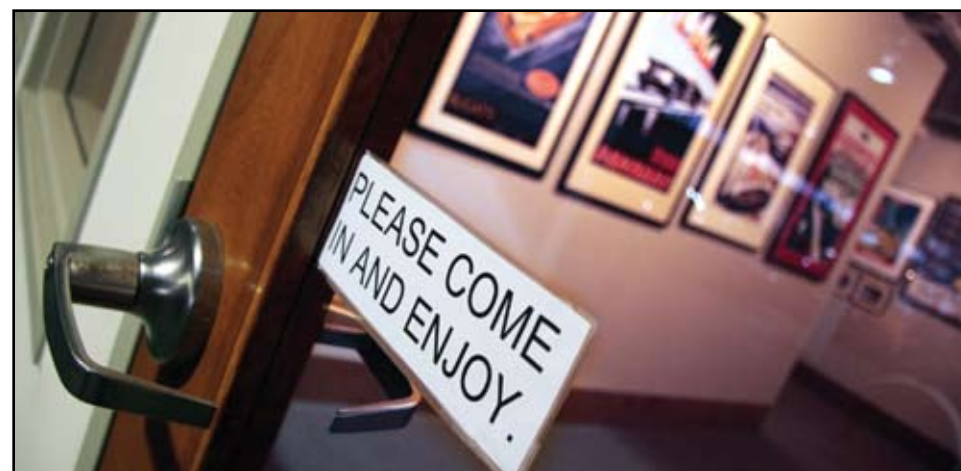
The staff will even drive the cars around Nashville and they've been known to demonstrate the Helicron in parking lots. Lane himself serves as director of the museum and he continues to prowl the globe for cars that are just a little bit out of the ordinary. His wife, Susan, serves as the museum's curator, and the two share an expansive knowledge of all things automotive – a little off the beaten path.

The Lane Motor Museum is located near downtown Nashville.

Top Left: Museum founder Jeff Lane's first car was an MG TF, a small sports car that unleashed an enthusiasm for small, often obscure cars from all over the world.

Bottom Left: Chrysler's Airflow wasn't the only aerodynamic masterpiece of the 1930s; Czechoslovakian automaker Tatra produced the amazing T-87.

Top Right: The collection is housed in an historic bakery near downtown Nashville. The vehicles on display are often one-of-a-kind cars that were tracked down all over the globe and brought to the Lane Motor Museum.



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