

# Weird and wonderful



The Lane Motor Museum takes a different approach to collecting and sharing vehicles



BY MARK J. McCOURT

PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY LANE MOTOR MUSEUM

Many automotive museums are dusty sorts of places—in a sense, tombs for the formerly mobile vehicles that rest within like so much taxidermy. Their collections of formal and staid cars may also support this impression. So it's doubly unusual to find an American museum that not only has gathered a collection of unique and unusual vehicles from around the world, but one that regularly exercises the cars and shares them with the general public at special events. The Lane Motor Museum takes the traditional car museum and tilts it on its head.

Founded by husband and wife team Jeff and Susan Lane, the Lane Motor Museum is situated in the former Sunbeam bakery plant at 702 Murfreesboro Pike in Nashville, Tennessee. The family-oriented museum was established in

2002 when they purchased the property to bring Jeff's then near-80 vehicle collection under one roof. In the past five years, Jeff and Susan have been able to expand their collection to more than 350 cars that hail from Asia, Europe and North and South America, and range in build date from 1924 to 2003.

The Lane Motor Museum is famous for its slogan, "Unique Cars from A to Z." Jeff, the director, has delighted in fulfilling that slogan, quipping, "We are missing E and Q. But we're working on those." Susan is the curator. "Jeff focuses on searching for unique autos, purchasing and overseeing restoration—'buying and driving' is what he says," she smiles. "I was a legal secretary for 20 years, so it was easy to transition legal research and writing into automotive research and writing. I focus on the administrative

aspect of the museum—what vehicles go on the floor, how they are grouped, writing the display signs."

The Lanes have gathered a fascinating group of micro cars, military and amphibious vehicles, prototypes, one-of-a-kind vehicles and motorcycles. The collection features the largest grouping of Czechoslovakian cars outside of Europe, as well as competition cars and alternative fuel vehicles of all ages. Faithful *HMN* readers may recall the February 2007 "Oddballs and Oddities" profile of Jeff and Susan's propeller-motivated 1932 Helicron; other unusual vehicles in the museum include the one-of-one 1928 Martin Aerodynamic Car, a 62-foot-long 1959 LARC-LX military landing craft, a three-wheeled 1965 Peel Trident, a 1984 Honda City Turbo and matching Honda Motocompo mini-scooter, and the Ford V-8-based 1934 McQuay-Norris prototype that used to star in Hemmings Motor News' own vehicle collection.

Susan and Jeff stress that their museum is a "working" collection, and Jeff says that every vehicle runs on a good day. "Seriously, I would say 95 percent of our collection runs. A few cars are going through major restoration... our goal is to keep all the cars in a condition to use them." Many of their vehicles are licensed for the road, and because they are positioned with plenty of access on the museum floor, he and Susan can take them out at any time, allowing them to live the dream of many car enthusiasts—to be able to collect desirable cars and drive them through interesting places in the company of like-minded enthusiasts.

The Lanes keep their museum experience fresh by treating visitors to frequently changing displays, as well as hosting car club functions on their premises. They also share their passion for these cars by participating in vintage automobile rallies like America's cross-country Great Race and the Paris-to-Monaco Rallye des Princesses. An up-to-date listing of the vehicle collection, a view into the museum's restoration shop, listings of upcoming events and much more are available at [www.lanemotormuseum.org](http://www.lanemotormuseum.org), and hours of operation and directions can be also attained by calling 615-742-7445. ☛

