



October 2007

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE
CENTRAL VIRGINIA CADILLAC AND
LASALLE CLUB

Back To Savanna

Last month, we featured a report from Bill Gilfoyle, who attended the National Cadillac and LaSalle Club meeting in Savanna, Georgia in August. Bill took so many great pictures that we weren't able to share them all in the September edition.

So, this month, we continue with more Cadillacs that were at the National Meet. Bill got an excellent picture of a 1939 Cadillac Series 61 Convertible Coupe from New Mexico. This car was a participant in the 18th cross-country "Great Race."

The V-8 powered 1939 Cadillacs had new grills; the main grill was now V-shaped and was flanked by a "tri-corner" grill in each fender catwalk. Window glass areas were larger and running boards were absent. The engine produced 135 brake horsepower and all four wheels had hydraulic brakes. Model year sales for the Series 61 were 5,913.



The next vehicle captured by Bill's camera was a beautiful yellow 1953 Cadillac Eldorado convertible from California. This luxury car was added to Cadillac's line as a unique one-model sub-series of the Model 62 lineup. Most every accessory, except air conditioning, was standard on the Eldorado. The 1953 Eldorado introduced the wraparound windshield to Cadillac buyers.



In addition to being wraparound, the windshield was also lowered and the door sills were cut-down. A flush-fitting metal tonneau cover hid the lowered top completely. The Cadillac “vee” was finished in gold rather than chrome and laced wire wheels completed the exterior ornamentation. The factory price for the new Eldorado was \$7,750.00, over \$3,600.00 more than the Series 62 convertible, and, perhaps as a result of the high price, only 532 were built.

Interestingly, Cadillac had announced that Hydra-matic Drive would be standard in all 1953 models. However, a fire in the Livonia, Michigan transmission plant stopped Cadillac production for about three weeks. Cadillac then began building cars with the Buick Dynaflo transmission until the fire damage could be repaired. Consequently, around 19,000 Cadillacs of the 102,500 automatic transmission-equipped 1953 Cadillacs were built with the Buick transmission.

Next, we have a photo of a 1957 Cadillac Eldorado Biarritz. The Eldorado



had become a two-model series the year before. The Biarritz name designated the convertible and the Seville name designated a two-door hardtop coupe. In 1957, one could also order an Eldorado Sedan DeVille; however, only four customers did so.

The rear of the Eldorado models was one of the most dramatic and elegant stylings of Cadillac designers in the post-war era. The rear fender and deck lid were sleekly rounded and a “shark fin” style tail fin pointed to the rear of the car from the center of each rear fender. Below the fin was a single, round tail light. Rear chrome bumpers began at the leading edge of the rear wheel well and swept around each rear body corner to incorporate two chrome pods; the outer ones housed the exhaust pipe exits and the inner ones housed the back-up lights. By 1957, the Eldorado Biarritz was only about \$2,000.00 more than the Series 62 convertible and 1,800 were sold.

Structurally, a new tubular-center X-frame added greater torsional rigidity and allowed the cars to assume a new, ground-hugging appearance. The Eldorado Biarritz and Seville offered an optional engine of 365 cubic inches producing 325 brake horsepower, 25 more than other Cadillacs. However, air conditioning, radios and heaters continued to be optional on most Cadillacs.

Our last car this month from the Savanna Show is a 1959 6200 Series



convertible (the former Series 62 line). Factory price for the convertible was \$5,455.00 and 11,130 were manufactured. The 1959 models were three inches lower than preceding models, rode a 130 inch wheelbase, and had V-8 engines displacing 390 cubic inches. Perhaps no other car captures the late 1950's exuberance and emphasis on size and chrome more than the 1959 Cadillac. It has attained iconic status and marks the zenith of flamboyant Cadillac styling.

Next month, we will finish sharing Bill's great photographs.

End of Year Car Shows

October brings beautiful fall weather in central Virginia. With that in mind, there's no excuse for not using the time to get your Cadillac or LaSalle in shape for an upcoming car show.

The 2nd Annual Sheltering Arms Car and Bike Show will be held **September 29th** from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Dale Ruritan Club, Rt. 10 and Chippenham Parkway in Richmond. The event, hosted by the DuPont 3000 Day Safety Club, benefits Sheltering Arms Hospital. Dash plaques will be given to the first 50 pre-registered vehicles. Awards will be given to the top ten vehicles and the best in show per class. For information, call (804)383-2961 or (804) 594-3786.

The 7th Annual Free Spirit Equine Rescue Shelter's Benefit Car Show will be held **October 20th** from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Powhatan County Fairgrounds. Registration is \$20.00. Dash plaques will be given to the first 100 pre-registered vehicles. The top 50 vehicles will be awarded trophies. For information, contact Tim or Marie O'Brien at (804) 598-8132

The Varina Car Show will be held **October 27th** at Varina High School. For information, contact Henry Nelson at (804) 795-1673.

The Potomac Area Cadillac and LaSalle Club is holding a show on **October 28th** at Capitol Cadillac in Greenbelt, Maryland. The show will feature LaSalles.

The 6th Annual Hilton Head Island Concours d'Elegance and Motoring Festival will be held from **November 1st** to the **4th** at Hilton Head, South Carolina. The honored marque for 2007 is Cadillac and LaSalle. You can register and find other information online at www.hhiconcours.com.

Our Club's own Fall Car Show will be held at Moore Cadillac on Broad Street in Henrico County on Saturday, **November 3rd** from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The rain date is Saturday, **November 10th**. A flier will be available at the October meeting. The Tidewater, Potomac and North Carolina Cadillac and LaSalle Clubs have been invited to participate. There is no cost to register and show your automobile.

September Meeting Minutes

The September meeting was held on September 13th at Los Amigos Restaurant on Midlothian Turnpike in Chesterfield. Five members attended and were graciously and generously treated to dinner by Club President Mike Daly. Our fall show, DMV changes to antique car registration, and the Club website were discussed.

Only three members attended the August meeting. The Club welcomes and encourages all its members to attend the monthly meetings. **So, let's make the October turnout a record breaker!**

September Treasurer's Report

The President reported that the club has a balance of \$1,436.76.

Future Meetings

- October 11th River City Diner North, 803 East Parham Road, just off the Parham Road exit from I-95 (between I-95 and Route 1) in Henrico County – 6:30 p.m.
- November 8th Mi Hacienda Mexican Restaurant, 8250 Midlothian Turnpike just west of Buford Road in Chesterfield County – 6:30 p.m.

Member Challenge Extended

Members agree that the club needs to grow to be stronger and more vital. However, no one won the member challenge that ran from January to May. SO, again, each member is challenged to bring a potential new member or members to the October 11th meeting.

Potential members do not need to own a Cadillac or LaSalle. They may simply have an interest or fondness for Cadillacs and LaSalles, aspire to own one in the future, or simply have an interest in classic cars.

A prize will be awarded to the member who brings the most guests to any meetings (June thru December) who become members before January 1. The gauntlet is thrown down once more. The prize will be awarded at the January meeting.

To date, Ron Threadgill is still winning.

Tidewater Club Show

The Tidewater Cadillac and LaSalle Club Car Show was held on August 8th, 2007 at Suttle Motor Company in Newport News. Central Virginia Club President Mike Daly and your newsletter editor were among the participants. The show was open to Cadillacs, LaSalles, Oldsmobiles, Buicks, and Pontiacs.

A wonderful 1940 LaSalle sedan was among the highlights of the show. As the sign in the second picture notes, this stylish vehicle was powered by a 130 horsepower flathead V-8 engine and could be owned for the amazing price of \$1,280.00. The 1940 LaSalle appears even more stylish to contemporary eyes than its more expensive Cadillac stable mate. The LaSalle had its headlights incorporated into the front fenders and did away with running boards while the 1940 Series 75 Cadillac retained running boards and still had free-standing headlights.



Another beautiful green car of a later vintage is this 1963 Cadillac Fleetwood 60 Special. Amazingly, this car has its original paint, chrome and upholstery. Of course, it also only has about 23,000 original miles. The lucky current owner found this emerald gem in North Carolina.

In 1963, Cadillac's famous fins continued to get shorter and bodyside sculpturing, prominent in 1961 and 1962, was completely eliminated. Interior



options reached an all-time high in 1963. Buyers had 143 possible interior choices based on color, fabric pattern, seat material (wool, leather, or nylon), and seat style (bench, bucket, and center armrest or not). Fourteen thousand buyers chose to buy a Fleetwood 60 Special sedan (in reality, a 4-door hardtop) in 1963 at a factory base price of \$6,366.00. Not a bad investment when you look at this car 45 years later.

Unfortunately, with government-imposed fuel standards, within 25 years huge Fleetwoods like this would no longer be built, as our next photo shows. In 1987, a Fleetwood buyer could purchase the car pictured below.



DeVilles and Fleetwoods had been downsized in 1985 into front wheel drive models that were two feet shorter and 600 pounds lighter than the previous year. And for 1986, the Fleetwood wasn't even a separate model; it became a DeVille option package. A rear wheel drive Fleetwood Brougham (essentially carried over from 1984) continued to be available. In 1985, 52,960 of the rear

wheel drive Brougham were sold compared to 114,278 of the front wheel drive DeVille/Fleetwood 4-door.

This 1987 Fleetwood d'Elegance is distinguished from the DeVille by a half-roof of padded vinyl, a smaller rear window, "opera" lights on the rear pillars, and identifying script on the rear door glass.

A new Fleetwood 60 Special (front wheel drive) also was available for 1987 that had a 5 inch longer wheelbase than the d'Elegance. This results in a somewhat confusing collection of three different Fleetwood models during this period – the front wheel drive, short wheelbase Fleetwood d'Elegance, the front wheel drive, long wheelbase Fleetwood 60 Special, and the "full-size" rear wheel drive Fleetwood Brougham.

Next month's newsletter will have pictures of other cars at the Tidewater Region show.

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