



# 1932 STUTZ

By Bruce McBroom

## DV-32 CONVERTIBLE COUPE, LeBARON

**M**y grandfather, Arthur N. Powers of Kankakee, Illinois, was a Stutz owner since 1914. His office was in Chicago, Illinois and his interests included golf and fast cars. In 1932, my mother Gwen was 17 and following graduation from high school, enrolled at Northwestern University in Evanston. My grandfather saw this car at the Chicago Auto Show in November 1931 and wanted to purchase it as a high school graduation present. The Stutz salesman told him no, the car was not for sale as it was touring the auto show circuit. This did not deter my grandfather who told the salesman he didn't need the car until next June and wrote a check. At the time he owned a 1929 Stutz limousine driven by William the chauffeur, as well as a 1932 Stutz DV-32 convertible sedan. >>>



> Opposite page: Kathie and Bruce McBroom and their 1932 Stutz DV-32 Convertible by LeBaron.

> This page clockwise from top: Bruce McBroom's grandfather Arthur N. Powers in his golfing attire > Newport Beach Concours, 1988.

The Stutz Motor Car Company of Indianapolis, Indiana dates to 1911 and the firm's entry in the inaugural Indy 500 that year gave rise to the motto, "The Car That Made Good in a Day."

Fast-forward to 1931 when Stutz introduced its DV-32 model powered by a 322-cubic-inch, straight-eight engine featuring double-overhead-valve camshafts and four valves per cylinder. This impressive engine produced 156 horsepower, complemented by a chassis with vacuum-assisted power brakes a Bijur lubrication system.

This car has custom coachwork by LeBaron and its original price was \$4,995, plus \$700 for chrome wire wheels. By comparison, a 1932 Ford V-8 sold for \$610.



# 1932 STUTZ



> Opposite page clockwise from top: Mechanic Tom Sparks, upholsterer Rick DeLanders, painter Bill Borzi and the 1932 Stutz in 1974 > Bruce McBroom's mother Gwendolyn Powers McBroom, the original owner of the 1932 Stutz DV-32 Convertible > Bruce McBroom's parents in the 1930s.

> This page clockwise from top: 1932 Stutz DV-32 at my grandparents residence in Kankakee, Illinois in the 1940s > Pebble Beach, 1975.

**“My grandfather would blow his horns and race the train to Kankakee ... always arrived first unless he encountered a farmer with a load of hay on the road.”**

While attending Northwestern University my mother was embarrassed to drive the car during the Depression but her sorority sisters and boyfriends loved it. During the World War II era, my parents could not afford gas or tires for the car so grandfather gave them a Ford in exchange for the Stutz. He still commuted to his Chicago office with William riding shotgun. On occasion, the return trip home would begin at 5 p.m., leaving the outskirts of Chicago to drive the 55 miles to Kankakee, with the Illinois

Central streamliner “Green Diamond” departing on the railroad tracks that paralleled the highway. My grandfather would blow his horns and race the train to Kankakee with the “Green Diamond” arriving at 5:53 p.m. Mr. Powers always arrived first unless he encountered a farmer with a load of hay on the road.

I grew up with the car at my grandparents’ home in Kankakee and my reward for helping polish the car on Sundays was a nickel which I used to buy some Wrigley’s gum. Other fond

memories include those occasions when the rumble seat would get stuck and I would have to crawl in the golf club door with a flashlight to unlatch it.

Following my grandfather’s passing in the 1950s, the car was stored at my uncle’s home in Connecticut. In the early 1970s, the Stutz came to California and it was now my turn to take care of it. Following the extensive period of storage, it was running a little rough. At that time the car was black with a white canvas top, which is the way I remembered it growing up.

### Tom Sparks and Restoration

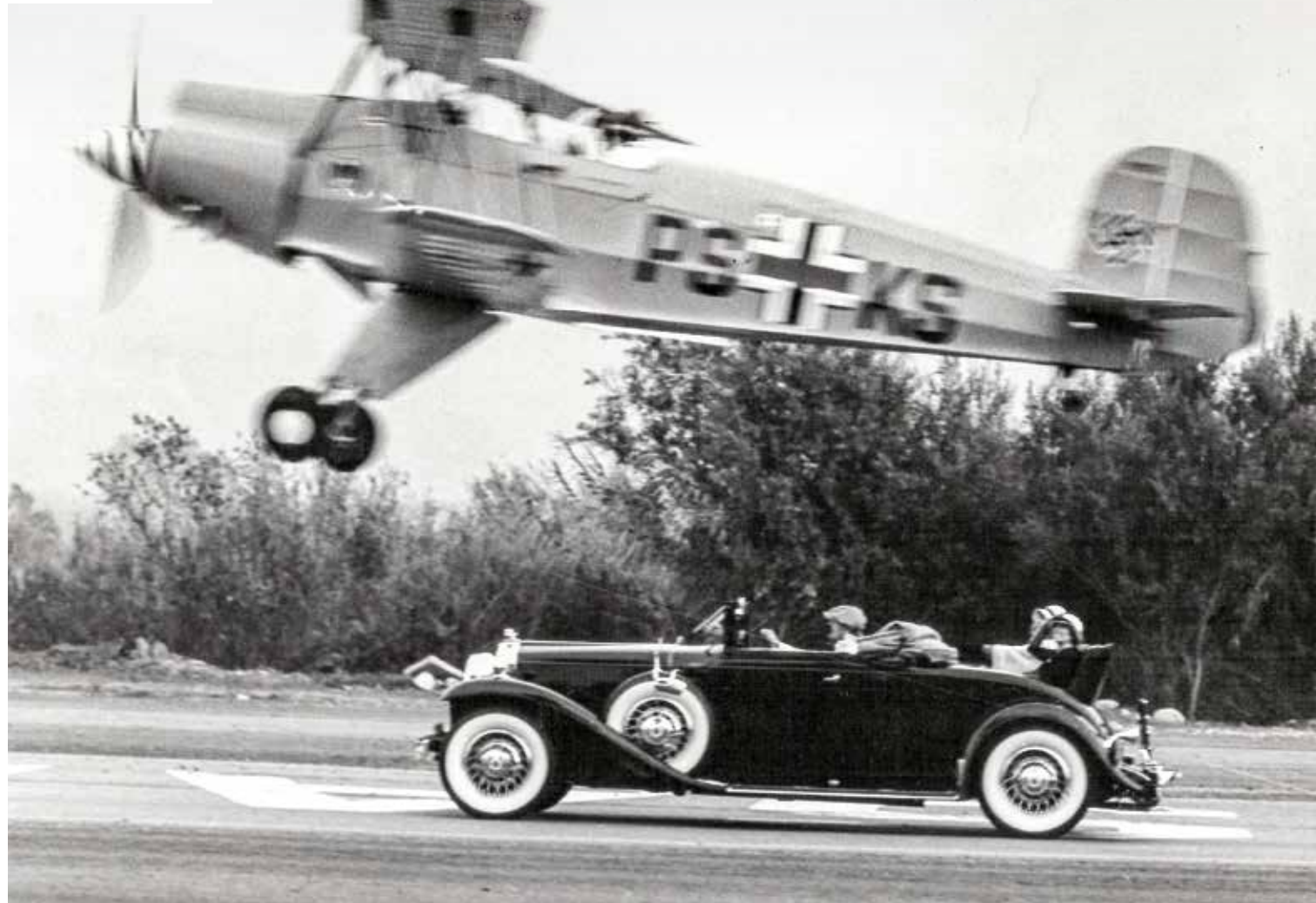
I met Tom Sparks the well-known “hot rod” builder, racer and auto mechanic some years before. His shop was across the street from one of the film studios and there were always amazing cars parked in his lot. At the time I drove a 1937 Chevrolet sedan and one day I stopped and introduced myself to Sparks and asked him if he could fix a few things on my car. He stood there looking at me and then at my car, and politely said, “Sorry, I don’t work on Chevrolets.” Right then

and there I decided that if I ever had a car worthy of restoration he would be the man to do it.

So when the Stutz came to California, I drove down the hill to his shop on Gower Street in Hollywood and pulled into Tom Sparks lot and said, “Would you work on this car?” He immediately said yes, but told me he had never worked on a Stutz and I would need to do the research and work on it with him to save money.

We disassembled the car and stripped the paint, removed the chrome and sent the chassis and body to Bill Borzi, another Classic Car Club restorer for body and paint work. The engine had 23,000 miles and when we took it apart it was in such good condition that all we did was replace the babbitt main bearings with >>>

# 1932 STUTZ



insert bearings, replace the valves with hardened valves and hone the cylinders.

After many months we were ready to paint the Stutz. I showed my mother and my grandmother progress photos and my grandmother asked, "What color are you going to paint it?" I replied black to maintain the authenticity of the car. My grandmother and my mother told me the original color was Pigeon's Blood. Nowhere in the disassembly had we found a trace of anything but black. My mother described Pigeon's Blood as a dark maroon. I was unable to find any factory paint chips or manufacturer's watches so we put a stop to the painting while we scratched our heads.

One day Tom Sparks called and I went down to the shop. He had pulled

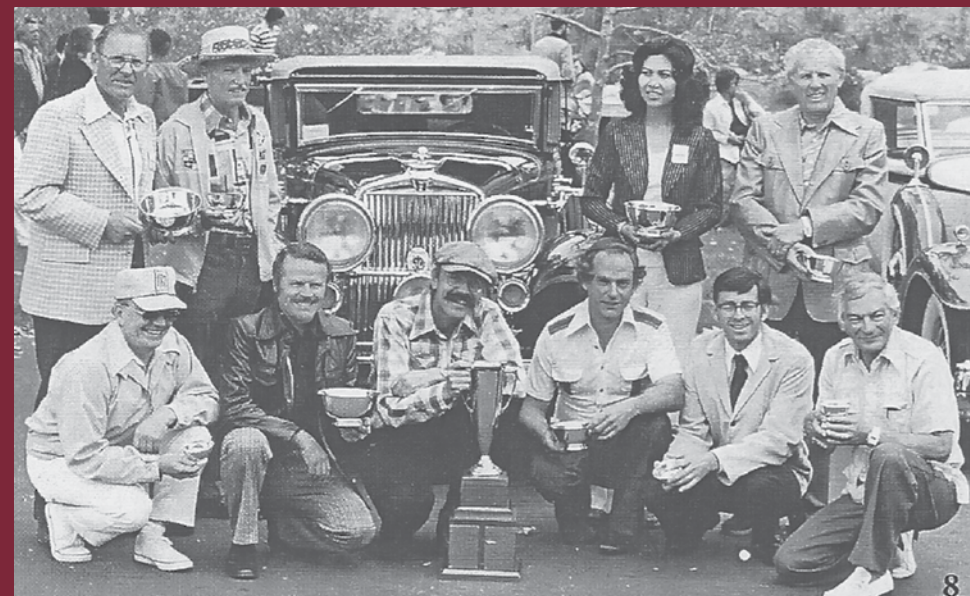
the clutch out for rebuild and when he dipped it to remove the grease, there on the top of the housing was an access cover that was a beautiful shade of maroon. We matched that and that is the color you see on it today.

The top had been redone and was white but luckily there was a top boot made from the original upholstery in herringbone gray, which is what you see on it today. Rick De Landers and his father owned Thomas Top Shop in Hollywood and they upholstered the interior and the top. They did all the stars cars and one day while the Stutz was in their shop I saw a Porsche 356 convertible they were working on for Steve McQueen.

Finally, in 1974 the Stutz was ready to show starting with the 1974 CCCA Grand Classic in Huntington Beach, California.

## '32 STUTZ SHOWINGS

- 1974 CCCA Grand Classic, Huntington Beach
- 1975 Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance
- 1977 Crane School Concours, Santa Barbara
- 1977 Paul Cerf Meet, San Marino
- 1983 LeCercle Concours at the Ambassador Hotel, Los Angeles
- 1983 Rancho Santa Fe Concours
- 1988 Newport Beach Concours
- 1991 LeCercle Concours, Westwood
- 1991 Santa Barbara Concours
- 2011 Santa Fe, New Mexico Concorso
- 2011 Indianapolis 500 100th Anniversary Stutz Meet
- 2014 Montecito, California Car Classic
- 2017 CCCA Grand Classic, San Marino



> Opposite page: Air race with 1928 Bucher-Jungman Bi-plane, Santa Paula, 1977.

> This page clockwise from top: Crossing the finish line Indianapolis Speedway, 2011 > Paul Cerf Award, 1977 (from the Side Mount Mirror)

### Racing an airplane

In 1977, photographer Henry Rasmussen who was doing a book entitled, "The Survivors", contacted me. His concept was to photograph cars and owners who had interesting histories. I was honored to be included with Phil Hill, Bill Harrah and others. I told Henry the story of my grandfather racing the Illinois Central streamliner and we tried to find a location to race a train and photograph it, without success.

Henry then asked if I would race a vintage airplane and of course I said yes. We went to the Santa Paula, California Airport where Henry found a pilot, Perry Schreffler, with a 1928 Bi-plane. Henry had a friend with an E-Type Jaguar for the camera car to run along side of me while he hung out the side of the car with his camera.

The pilot said his take off speed was 85 mph and he gave me a head start. About halfway down the runway I looked in the rear view mirror and saw a huge airplane tire just above my head so I kept my foot to the floor as he flew over me.

### More fond memories

In 1998 the Stutz was our "getaway car" at our wedding in Laguna Beach.

In 2011 we attended the 100th Anniversary of Stutz Motor Cars at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway. Stutz Club members were invited to the raceway to spend four days at the track a week before the Indy 500. The big thrill was the final day when they allowed Stutz owners to take a lap of the oval. Looking through the windshield and passing other Stutz cars and a 1928 Stutz fire engine was incredible. Our Stutz turned 30,000 miles on the track that day.

In June 2017 we brought our Stutz to the CCCA Grand Classic in San Marino and came home with a trophy. We still enjoy showing our Stutz even though it is a 43-year-old restoration, and yes, I have been polishing it since age 6!