

*Bill and Barbara Bartlett's  
'Phantom'*  
1940 Cadillac '62 Coupe

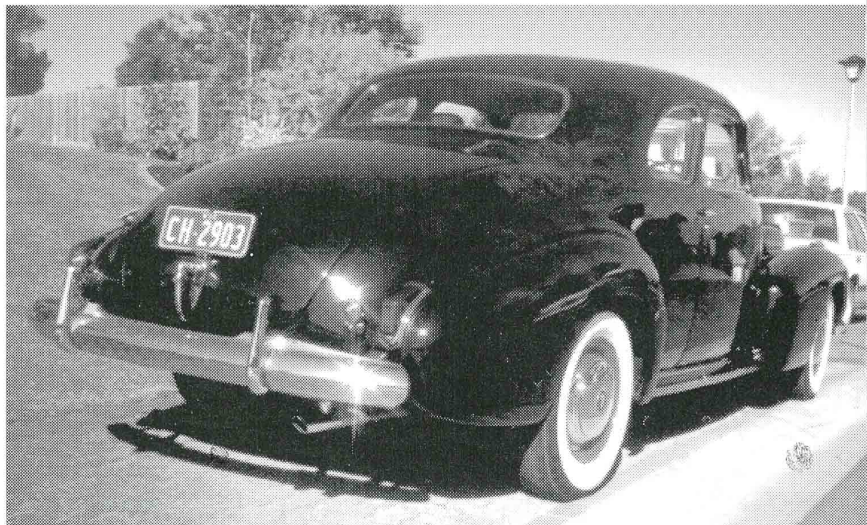
# PRIDE & JOY

A LITTLE KNOWLEDGE IS A DANGEROUS THING...

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I suppose my Pride & Joy story is the usual... mix of frustrations, strained home relationships, rapid learning curves and absolute confirmation that 'a little knowledge is a dangerous thing!'

The Cadillac 'bug' invaded our house in the early eighties, and diagnosis revealed that the only cure would be a '38-'40 Sixty Special or similar. On joining the Cadillac LaSalle Club, tracking down every 60S in Australia and not being able to convince anybody to part with one, I started to look further afield. Out of the blue, Irwin Sinclair rang me re a '40 coupe he believed was being brought into the country from the USA, and which would be for sale.

To simplify a complicated story... on locating the intending importer, I found that he had changed his mind about bringing the car in. However, he had driven the car in USA and was able to give a good description, with photos. I was able to take over the transaction and the car was here three weeks later. The owner had confided in me during

negotiations that, had he not obtained his price for the car, he was planning to 'rod' it. A gallant gesture on my part I thought.

From the photographs and descriptions it was obvious of course, that this beautiful coupe, which was being used as an every

home, and at last, weekends might be less of a work-fest. If only!

Unloading the coupe from the container revealed a beautifully shaped machine which was nearly as good as the pictures indicated - but I knew then that simple cosmetics would not do justice to the car. I also couldn't help wondering why there were only 1,322 of this great shape built.

The 5 km drive from the wharf to quarantine in the usual Dynon Road traffic was a highlight - more so for the Customs Agent who sat, rigidly, where the steering wheel should be, bravely pretending to be liking this new experience! In fact, the car performed faultlessly, with power steering, braking and general driveability being even better than I had expected.



day driver, only needed 'cosmetics'. This prospect pleased me a lot and Barbara heaps, after some of the 'restorable' projects I had brought

Being part way through a restoration of a 1929 Chrysler 75, the Cadillac was deferred until the Chrysler was completed.

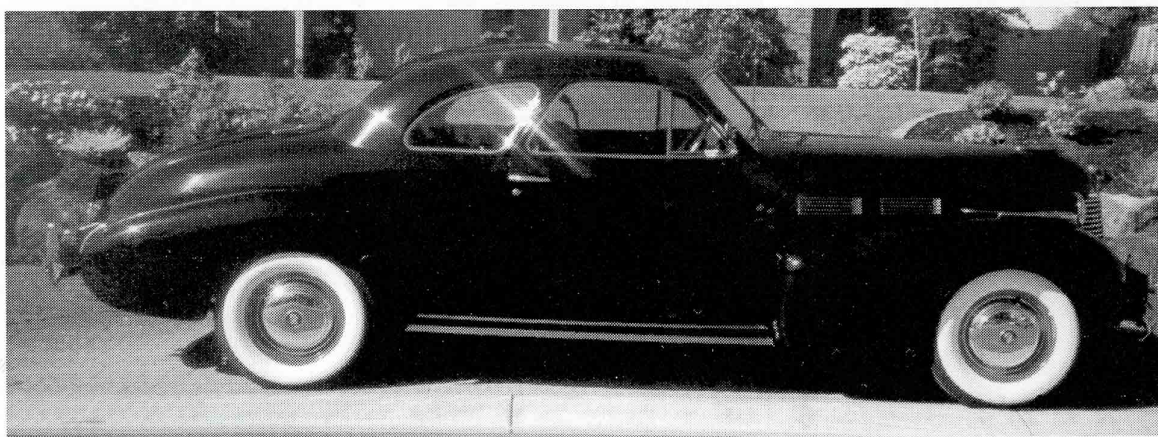
The catalyst for such completion was the '88 Bicentennial Rally to Canberra, and my daughter wanting the Chrysler for her wedding about the same time. These two major events in hand then enabled some serious restoration to commence. A large envelope of documents with the Cadillac indicated

provision ex-factory. This combined with the straightforward dash arrangement simplified the conversion whilst maintaining authenticity.

The restoration process suffered a severe setback when a rebuilt and reinstalled motor failed, required removal and another rebuild.

cord, and rounded off a restoration which gives me a lot of satisfaction. I was a bit miffed on the wedding day though - some of the guests took more interest in the bride!

As with any restoration, it is the collective input of many people which produces the result. This case was no exception and I am



fastidious ownership for most of the preceding twenty years, so that stripping it down revealed no unpleasant surprises. In fact, the real surprise was how sound most things were, with the only rust being in the boot sealing channels and in the lower corners of the front and rear screens. These were easily corrected with fabricated replacement panels, and the panel beater said he had to give up his gym work when repairing even the minor guard dings. He swears Cadillac's major contribution to the US war effort must have been the armour plate used in 1940 guards.

The decision as to converting to right hand drive was simplified by Graham Ashmore coming up with a '40 RHD steering box, for which there was chassis mounting

A typical Ken Moss 'needle' renewed motivation to re-enter the garage. The only complication this time was the need to obtain three despatches of new pistons from the US before my now paranoid engine reconditioner could make up a set he was happy to use.

A decision to move house in '92 again put the Cadillac on hold, with work recommencing when youngest son Richard announced that his ideal wedding car was a 1940 Cadillac coupe, and the date had been set for December 1995.

My long suffering panel beater friend carried out a complete colour change (and is still a friend after repainting when I wasn't happy with the first colour). Grant White upholstered the car in his usual skilled fashion, with Bedford

indebted to many. As well as my ever tolerant and understanding wife, I must acknowledge the generosity of many Club members: Ken Moss, Irwin Sinclair, Peter Ratcliff, Neil Staples, John King, Les Mathieson and Ray Ingram, whose expertise, supply of parts and encouragement helped maintain the focus. These people typify the qualities I have found to be quite outstanding features of this Club, and which I am sure will assist in maintaining its excellent growth.

So much for a broad outline of this 'Pride & Joy', or 'Phantom' as it was regarded by many. It's done at last, and I'm more than satisfied with the result. Would I do it again? I'm told not!!

Bill Bartlett