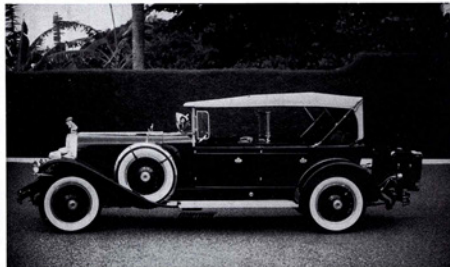
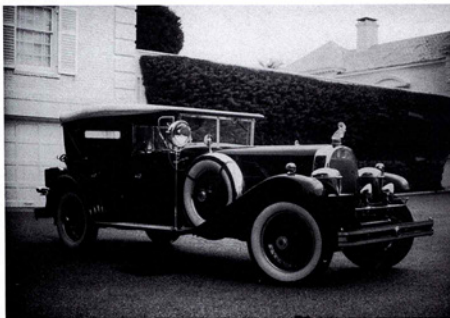


D U P O N T



1928 duPont
Model G
Sport Phaeton,
Merrimac.

Owner:
Willis H. duPont
of Palm Beach, Florida

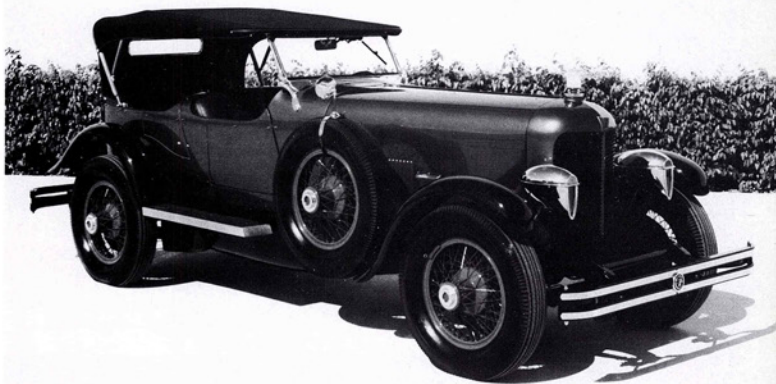
By 1920 both Pierre S. duPont and E. Paul duPont were in the automobile business. The former was president of General Motors, the latter president of duPont Motors. Neither regarded the other as competition.

Introduced at the Automobile Salon in New York City's Hotel Commodore in 1919 and produced for most of its life in Wilmington, Delaware, the duPont was an automobile low in production, high in price, sometimes unusual and always interesting. After nearly a decade in business, the company had proceeded from Models A through F and manufactured approximately 350 cars. Comparatively, the new duPont Model G, with 200 produced in three-and-a-half years, would be a best seller. There were several reasons.

One was the new duPont dealer in New York City: A. J. Miranda, Jr., whose other wares included Maybach and Delage. Within weeks of the Model G's introduction in late 1929, duPont announced two entries in the 24 Hours of Le Mans the following June, Miranda to co-drive one of the cars with Charles Moran, Jr., sportsman, gentleman driver and American representative to the Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA). Those credentials, and Miranda's profession, might suggest the Le Mans expedition was something of a lark. Not so. This first all-American entry in the renowned French race was very serious. Alas, one of the cars wasn't completed on time and the other retired after only three of the twenty-four hours. Moran and Miranda lamented afterwards that the culprit was the compulsory ballast in the rear of the car: it had broken through the floorboards, put a kink in the driveshaft and cracked the gearbox casing.

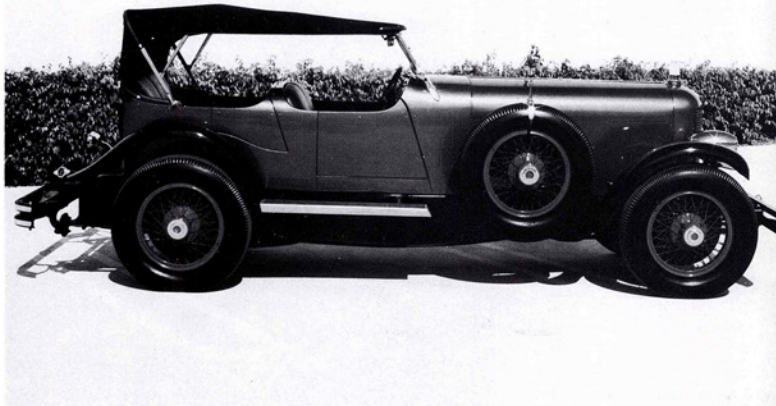
Still the car's early retirement did not mitigate the sporting prowess of the Model G. Thirteen Four-Passenger Speedsters similar to the Le Mans cars were produced; three survive, among them Bill Lassiter's. The only doors on the car are the two on the passenger side which makes entry and egress something of a chore but not one that bothered Bill much when he drove this car on the Michigan CARavan.

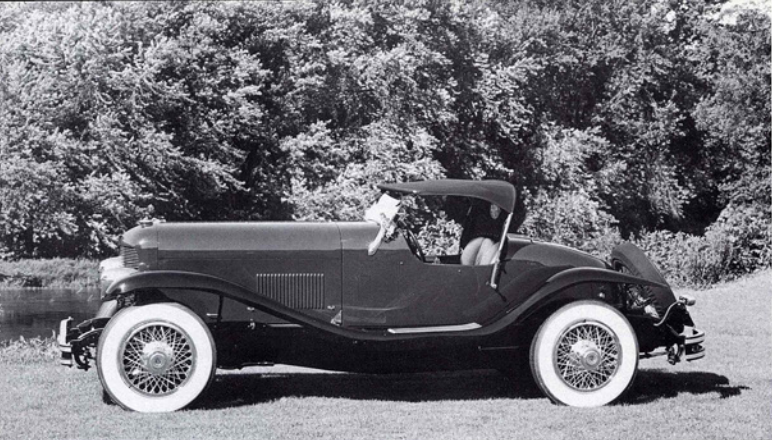
According to serial numbers, Willis duPont's Merrimac Sport Phaeton, which he has owned since 1973, was the first Model G built. It was shipped June 29th, 1928, to Baltimore, Maryland. Approximately thirty Model G's were produced during that calendar year.



1929 duPont Model G Four-Passenger Speedster, Merrimac

Owner: W. G. Lassiter, Jr. of West Palm Beach, Florida

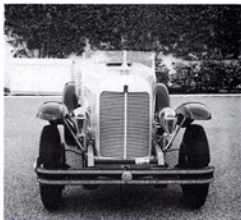




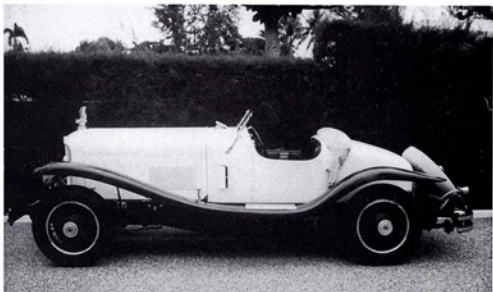
1929 duPont Model G Two-Passenger Speedster, Merrimac. Owner: Richard E. Riegel, Jr. of Montchanin, Delaware. Photo: K. Karger

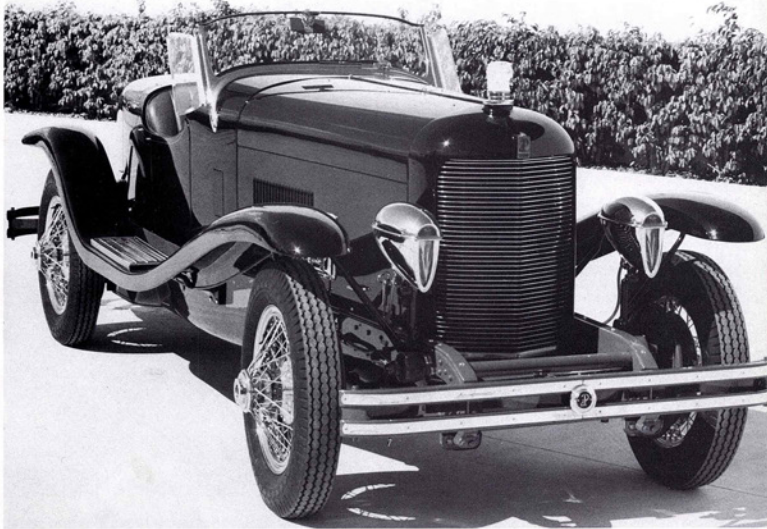
Few things enhance the sales appeal of a new model more than an early purchase by a celebrity. The show car of the Model G Two-Passenger Speedster was bought the moment Mary Pickford spotted it as the perfect birthday present for her husband, Douglas Fairbanks. Veteran duPont designer G. Briggs Weaver couldn't have been more delighted because the Speedster had been planned as a swashbuckling sports car for those who still mourned the demise of the Mercer Raceabout. The car was wonderfully atypical: an aluminum body with one-piece sweeping fender, cast aluminum grille, Woodlite headlights, tachometer and exhaust cutout as standard equipment. Some Speedsters had the spare tire contained within the tail, others had rumble seats. All were guaranteed 100 mph by the factory.

Total Two-Passenger Speedster production was eleven cars, of which six survive. Jerry Riegel's was originally owned by Irving Smith, Jr. of Orange, New Jersey; Bill Lassiter's by W. H. Hodgman of Los Angeles. The first owner of Willis duPont's Speedster was the artist Fred Dana Marsh, who purchased at least three duPonts from 1927 through 1930. At some point during the forties, Marsh gave the Speedster to the police chief of Ormond Beach, Florida.



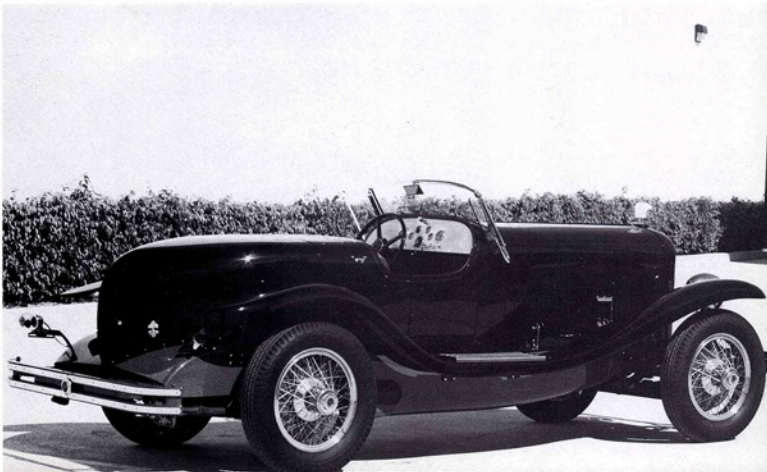
1930 duPont Model G Two-Passenger Speedster, Merrimac
Owner: Willis H. duPont of Palm Beach, Florida





1930 duPont Model G Two-Passenger Speedster, Merrimac

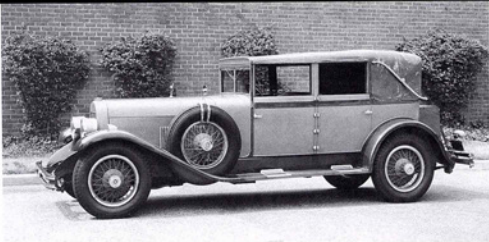
Owner: W. G. Lassiter, Jr. of West Palm Beach, Florida



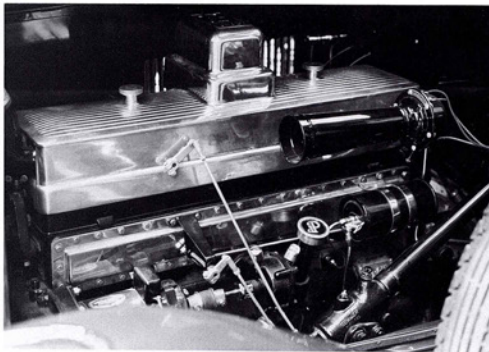
Among the further factors that made a success of the Model G was its engine. DuPont had begun life with a four and continued with a six through 1928. The Model G was the company's first straight eight, a 322-cubic-inch Continental delivering 125 hp. With this model, too, duPont expanded its offerings from a mere handful of body styles to a full dozen on a 141-inch wheelbase (five inches longer than the Model F). Elegant and graceful coachwork had been the mark of the duPont since its introduction. The Model G carried these attributes to their zenith.

Many duPont bodies were produced by Merrimac, like Jerry Riegel's Convertible Sedan which was one of eight built. Originally shipped to the E. A. Van Trump, Jr. dealership in Los Angeles, the car remains in essentially original condition.

The Waterhouse Four-Door Sedan has been in the Ryon family since 1939 when Mortimer's father purchased it from a New York City Cadillac dealer to do chores on the family farm: "Because it had been consigned to be cut up as scrap, my father bought the car by the pound, \$50.00 or a half-cent per pound. He always claimed it cost more to license the car in New York State than he paid for it, a fact I've not been able to confirm. From first sight I fell in love with the duPont; I was ten years old at the time. Over the next several years, the car performed all the tasks for which it had been purchased: lifting hay into the hay loft, carrying barbed wire and fence posts to the far reaches of the property, hauling feed for the cows and plowing snow in the winter. And I learned to drive on the car when I wasn't old enough to do so legally. On July 15th, 1945, I got my official driver's license and my father, who knew how I felt about the duPont, gave it to me for my birthday. During my college years, the car remained my sole transportation and was still capable of cruising at 70 mph between my home and Lafayette College in Easton, Pennsylvania. This was with the original tires, including the left rear which had been made bald by hauling hay up into the barn. Once I gave a ride home to a fraternity brother over the Pocono mountains during Christmas vacation. He never asked for another ride in my car. It has never had a heater. Finally, after farm work, teenage and college transportation, the duPont was retired from active service. Stored for many years thereafter, restoration began in 1979 and was completed in 1990. The original work order for the car, which



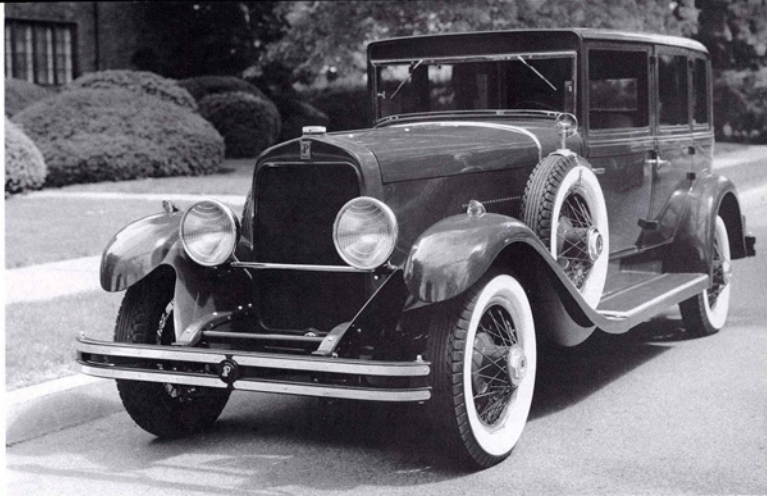
1929 duPont Model G Convertible Sedan, Merrimac
Owner: Richard E. Riegel, Jr. of Montchanin, Delaware Photo: K. Karger



I obtained from the files of Mrs. E. Paul duPont, was a considerable help in returning the Waterhouse Sedan to the splendor it had when first exhibited at the Philadelphia Automobile Show in 1930. The car certainly deserved it."

Above and above center:
Instrument board and engine
compartment in Mort Ryon's '29
duPont Model G Four-Door Sedan,
Waterhouse.

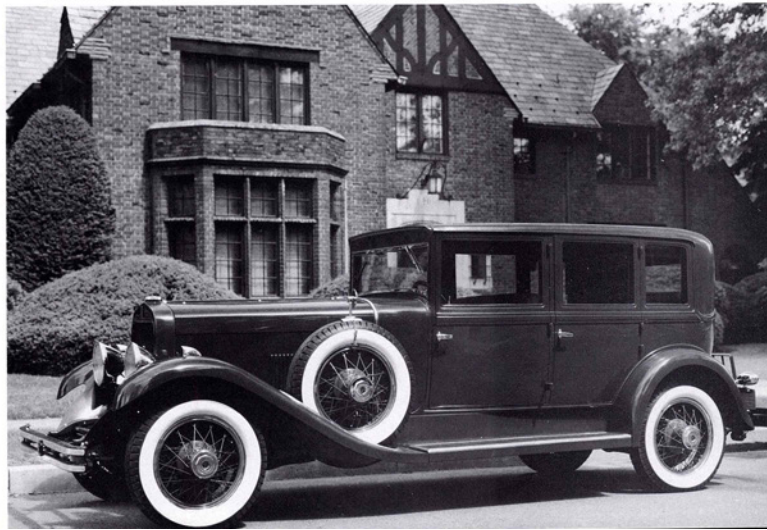
Photos: Stan Smith

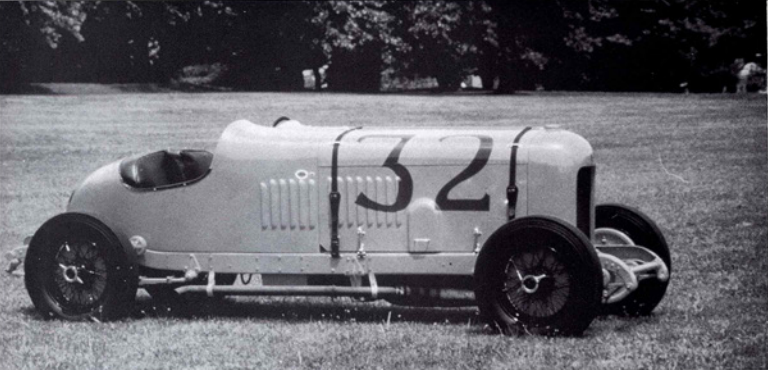


1929 duPont Model G Four-Door Sedan, Waterhouse

Owner: Mortimer Ryon of Solebury, Pennsylvania

Photos: Stan Smith





This page: 1930 duPont Model SG1 Indianapolis Race Car, Waterhouse

Owner: Willis H. duPont of Palm Beach, Florida

Although duPont Motors cannot be said to have had an extensive competition program, the company did race on two continents. The Le Mans excursion of '29 was followed by entry in the Indianapolis 500 in 1930. The Model G wheelbase was shortened to 125 inches, the Model G engine was race tuned to 140 hp. The race car had its own special axle ratio, propeller shaft, carburetor and Rudge-Whitworth wire wheels; the usual speed-reducing appurtenances (windshield, fenders, etc.) were removed. Charles Moran was the driver, and qualified the car at just under 90 mph. The Indy 500 was a



crash carnival in '30, and the duPont, alas, was among the ten racers that came to grief. On the 22nd lap Moran slid on an oil patch and into a wall. Thus ended the duPont's racing career. Interestingly, although Speedway officials had changed the rules to give semi-stock cars a fighting chance against the purebred racers, few manufacturers had been enticed. That duPont Motors tried is a credit to the marque, and that the car still exists is super. Willis duPont has owned the Indy racer since 1979.

Page opposite: 1931 duPont Model H Sport Phaeton, Merrimac

Owner: Richard E. Riegel, Jr of Montchanin, Delaware

In May of 1930 Paul duPont purchased the Indian Motorcycle Company of Springfield, Massachusetts and moved his engineering department there to be closer to Merrimac, producer of many of the Model G bodies. The Model H was duPont Motors' last attempt to stay alive in the custom automobile market as the Great Depression took hold. The engine and drivetrain remained the same but the wheelbase was lengthened to 146½ inches. Just three examples were built, two sedans and the car you see here, which Jerry Riegel has owned for nearly three decades. It was shown, together with several Model G duPonts, at the 1931 New York Automobile Show. Cummins Catherwood of Philadelphia was its first owner. Production of all duPonts ceased in January 1932. A receiver was appointed in February 1933.

