

# ONLY 9 OF THESE FACTORY ORIGINALS STILL EXIST

Story and photos by Richard Greene

**H**ere's how the Packard Motor Company advertised this remarkable 1934 12-cylinder member of the celebrated family of luxury automobiles that dominated the decade of the 1930s:

"Notice that, in appearance, this car is unmistakably a Packard, with the famous identifying lines that make Packard America's most distinctive car. Then drive this Packard and ask it to do everything you would like a fine car to do."

While such claims were considered debatable by Packard's competitors, they may be even more appropriate today as classic car collectors everywhere value theirs as much as any others of the era.

For David Oberle, pictured here with his, it's a passion that gives support to Packard's ad from 88 years ago. Regular readers of our monthly car feature may be doing a bit of a double take as David and his Packard look familiar. That's because about three years

ago, we featured him with his 1937 model that he had acquired for his collection to honor his grandmother's birth year.

But when he found this totally original 1934 five-passenger model that is one of only nine that still exist, he could not pass up the opportunity to make it his.

"I found it in upstate New York and became only its second owner," he says. "It was used by the first for driving to church on Sundays and has only 9,366 original miles on the odometer."

That works out to an average of just 106 miles per year.

David continues, "It has never been restored and is original throughout –

including everything under the hood. That's even though Packard had described the engine capable of being rebuilt seven times before reaching the 100,000-mile mark.

"It's the last Packard with a fold-out windshield and with running lights that match the headlights." >>>>



David Oberle stands with his 1934 Packard. The spectacular vehicle is in original shape and, when he bought it, it had been driven just 9,366 miles.



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**PRICES FOR THE '37 Touring Sedan** were just under \$2,000, resulting in the company's success with consumers - more than 50,000 of them rolled off the Packard assembly line.



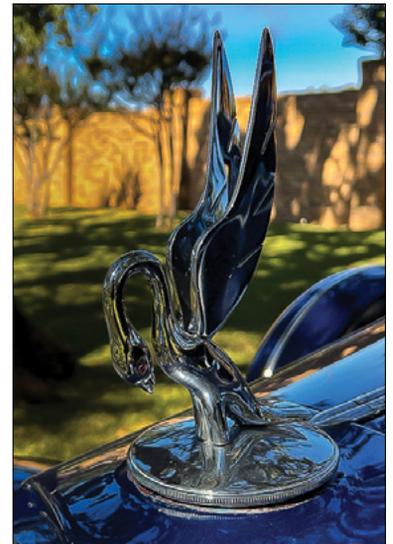
As confirmation of the special place this Packard holds in automotive history, the prestigious JBS Collection web site identifies the 1934 series as arguably the most sought-after of all the Packards.

Hyman, Ltd., describes the car as a "careful evolution" of the previous series, boasting new fenders that "gave it a fuller, more elegant look that today makes it among the most attractive and highly prized American Full Classics.

"Performance was strong but the Twelve was best suited for effortlessly traveling in silence and impeccable style. A standout among its peers, few cars could touch the Packard Twelve for its quality, presence and pace."

The 12-cylinder models of the first half of the decade had established the Packard as the premier brand, but growing headwinds of the collapsed U.S. economy would bring change.

Recall that David's 1937 model was produced as a mid-priced eight-cylinder car in a marketing strategy to compete with the Chrysler Airstream, the Lincoln Zephyr and General Motor's

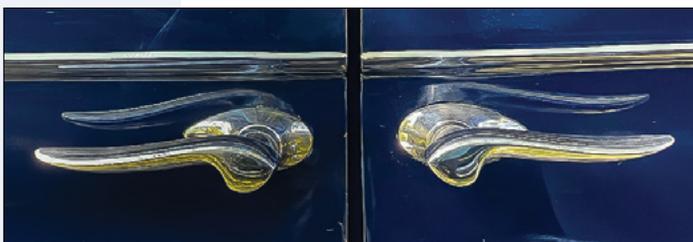


LaSalle like the one we covered in our last issue.

Prices for the '37 Touring Sedan like David's were just under \$2,000 resulting in the company's success with consumers as more than 50,000 of them rolled off Packard's massive assembly line in Detroit.

That marketing strategy kept the company going during the final years of the Great Depression, still providing buyers the cachet of owning what was then considered as one of America's most prestigious cars.

The result is that David not only has both terrific cars for us to admire, but they represent a lesson in automotive history and how car makers navigated through one of the more challenging periods of American enterprise prior to the outbreak of the second world war. **A**



**The 1934 Packard represents a lesson in automotive history and how car makers navigated through one of the more challenging periods in the United States: The Great Depression.**

