



Number 36

Volume 13 No 4

October 2017

Sallee Speaks



Geoff Pollard's 37 Coupe, Victoria, Australia, refer rebuild in Para 6a) below

Newsletter of the LaSalle Appreciation Society

A Chapter of the Cadillac & LaSalle Club Inc.



1. Director’s Speak

Hello Fellow Sallyites,

Just days after the last issue of Sallee Speaks hit the streets I received a phone call on my voice mail from a highly respected Cadillac- LaSalle member. Many of you will not know his name but I can assure you if it wasn’t for Norm Uhler there would be no Cad-LaSalle Club. Norm Uhler is one of the three or so people who conceived the idea of an antique car club dedicated to Cadillacs and LaSalles back in 1958 when I was still in high school. Norm’s name remains on the Regional Activities Award given every year at the Grand National Meet to any region in the U.S.A. that achieves certain levels of activity, including car shows, social functions, etc. More to the point, Norm has always encouraged the inclusion of LaSalles into all mention of the club and has been a constant advocate for this chapter. Although he is now 90 and lives in Arizona, he took the time to call just to congratulate the team that makes this chapter work. From us to Norm; a heartfelt thank you and best wishes from all of us.

Since our members are from like every where, news travels slowly. I learned just prior to the Grand National that a fellow judge at Grand Nationals and a dependable LaSalle Chapter meeting attendee who always spoke of his 1929 8550 LaSalle sedan he was working on, forever it seems, has passed away. Don Baker always came to Grand Nationals and always judged early LaSalles and always came to the chapter meetings. He was a good man. We will miss him. Our sympathy goes out to his wife, Mary.

Just yesterday I received word on the passing of Matt Larsen, co-author of the LaSalle ‘bible’. Matt spend untold hours pouring through production records at the Heritage Center archives, piecing together the production history of LaSalle. His co-author, Ron VanGelderren, left us last year, both after years of declining health. Two of the foremost advocates for LaSalle.

I suppose after the sad news I should give good news. The Grand National was great fun, there were a number of LaSalles in attendance, and I was able to speak to many of the members and a few who were not. Since I was judging and Nancy was hosting the ladies tea and fashion show, Bud and Barbara Coleman ran the meeting and provided the minutes that appear elsewhere in this issue. Thank you to the Colemans for covering for us. Editor John tells me that pictures of the LaSalles at the Grand National will appear over the next few issues. Chairman Ronnie Hux organized an impressive array of activities, from bus tours to a Friday night ‘Flash Back Friday’ dance party with Valley Forge member Joe Caristo’s nine piece band. I’ve been to 29 Grand Nationals and I never saw such participation as that Friday night. WOW! Incidentally the dance contest was won by Valley Forge’s own 80 years young Al Cowling and his wife Mary.

The Friday night dance party opened my eyes to the number of younger members who have been infiltrating the CLC ranks, unmentioned at most regional meetings. The youngsters are joining, and participating. Hooray!

LaSalles forever, Jack

2.Contents

1. Director’s Speak 1

2.Contents 1

3 Message from the Editor 2

4 LAS Contact Information 2

5 LAS Charter Members 2

6 LaSalle Articles 2

6a) Rebuilding the engine in my 37 coupe by Geoff Pollard..... 3

6b) History of LaSalle Part 13, 1939..... 8

6c) 1939 Publicity.....	20
6d) LaSalle Badge.....	21
7 Members Cars.....	22
7a) Jack and Nancy and John and Chris' 39 LaSalles.....	22
7b) Jack's 1940 5067 CCP	23
7c) 2017 Grand National LaSalles	23
8 Merchandise.....	26
9 Cadillac LaSalle Chronical	26
10 LAS Chapter Report.....	26
11 Minutes of the latest LAS Meeting and Treasurer's report.....	26
12 LAS Treasure Chest	27
13 In Closing	27

3 Message from the Editor

While this edition is focusing on the 1939 year I am pleased to have the 37 coupe as a cover car due to the terrific rebuild article supplied by local LaSalle owner Geoff Pollard. Due to the amount of articles I have on 1939 I will again focus on 1939 in the next edition. Of all the

cars registered for the recent Valley Forge and Potomac Region GN there were 16 LaSalles documented in the Official Program. Many of these will be included in the following editions of Sallee Speaks.

Remember "Cadillac Excellence made LaSalle Supreme"

4 LAS Contact Information

Director: Jack Hotz 856-429-0641
JacksCaddy@aol.com
 318 East Cottage Avenue
 PO Box 263
 Haddonfield, NJ 08033

Asst. Director: Bud Coleman 610-644-5981
BandBC40LaSalle@aol.com
 1515 LeBoutillier Road
 Malvern, PA 19355-8742

Treasurer/Marketing: Barbara Coleman
BandBC40LaSalle@aol.com

Secretary/ Membership: Nancy Hotz
NansCaddy@aol.com

Remember that all LAS members must also be registered with the National Cadillac and LaSalle Club

Editor: John Byrden
cjbyrden@gmail.com
 +61 3 94312194
 3 Otis Place Eltham Victoria 3095
 Australia

5 LAS Charter Members

The Charter Members of the LAS are: David Barr, Michael Barruzza, Barbara Coleman, Aaron "Bud" Coleman, Bill Edmunds, Jim Fields, Richard Hartkorn, John "Jack" Hotz, Nancy Hotz, Donald J. Miller, Joseph Mosteller, Jr., Lee Mullen, Mary Mullen, Richard Nalavany, Seth Pancoast, Clyde "Rob" Robison, David Rothman, Toni Rothman, Richard Sills, and Ted Walter.

6 LaSalle Articles

Articles presented here are provided for information; however their content has in no way been verified for accuracy. Readers are requested to make their own judgment on

the usefulness or otherwise of these articles. Further, it is assumed that members forwarding articles have obtained permission for their publication by the original owner. Ed

6a) Rebuilding the engine in my 37 coupe by Geoff Pollard

Geoff is a long time CLC member residing in rural Harcourt ,Victoria, Australia...Ed

The last time I talked about this project in "Sallee Speaks" number 33, January 2017, the engine had been removed and was awaiting inspection by the engine rebuilder. We believed that the engine, although tired and fuming heavily was basically very original, and untouched. The car certainly had matching engine, chassis, and body numbers, and from external examination the engine appeared totally original.

Well you can be fooled! It turns out the car had been overhauled, we suspect in the 1950s, and had been fitted with cheap, aftermarket rebuild engine parts. And further, the hydraulic valve lifters fitted originally to this engine had been replaced with solid lifters fitted inside the cam followers. Also the conrod bolts were by and large butchered. One head was warped around 40 thou, which explains the leaking head gasket, and the wear in the bores was around 20 thou of an inch. I suppose that considering the car is 80 years old we should have expected these sort of problems. Fortunately you can buy most engine parts in the USA for these Cadillac engines, but as is always the case with car restoration there are a few essential items which you can't get!

The photo below shows the solid lifters fitted to the engine during an earlier rebuild. They were also a very poor fit in the cam followers but fortunately had not done any damage. And even more fortunate is that you can still buy new, reproduction hydraulic lifters in the USA.



LEFT: THE PHOTO SHOWS FOUR CAM FOLLOWERS IN A BLOCK WITH ONE OF THE SOLID LIFTERS IN PLACE AND TWO AT THE FRONT OF THE PHOTO SHOWING THE ADJUSTING NUT.

The other real problem we had was obtaining new conrod bolts. Conrod bolts are very highly stressed components in engines and a breakage can result in catastrophic engine failure. On assembly these bolts are not only torqued but are also strained beyond the torque setting which makes their continued re-use problematic. I tried everywhere to get new bolts in the USA including talking to one of the largest manufacturer of conrod bolts

in the world. And here was the real problem. The conrod bolts fitted to Cadillac/LaSalle engines in this era had an unusual thread, known as UNS (as opposed to the normal UNF or UNC) I found out that this thread type was called Unified Special and was used in some American cars around the 1930s and 40s. But UNS is not common these days, and bolt manufacturers cannot make these for a conrod bolt without producing an expensive thread rolling die. It is not simply a matter of machining a thread because the highly stressed conrod bolt threads need to be rolled not cut.

I could find 8 short bolts but couldn't find the 8 long bolts anywhere. They are scarce even in the US. However I did manage to find and purchase 8 NOS (New Old Stock) conrods made by Cadillac for the US Army as spares during WW2. And when they arrived they were wrapped in WW2 wax paper, and then each one was packed in an oil skin wallet. As only the US Army would do! Anyway they were brand new, original, and more importantly had the precious conrod bolts. And while I had to spend more money on this solution than just buying 16 bolts, they were not available anyway. So the engine was fitted with new rods and bolts and I could sleep better at night.



THIS PHOTO SHOWS A NOS CONROD FITTED WITH NEW CONROD BOLTS. THE WW2 PROTECTIVE WAX PAPER AND OIL SKIN WALLET ARE SHOWN IN THE PHOTO. THE RODS ARE STILL PERFECTLY PRESERVED AFTER ALMOST 80 YEARS.

The water pump was rebuilt in Melbourne, and the clutch checked out by one of Victoria's best clutch experts, and it was perfect. Mind you the car always had a beautiful clutch and gearbox, so I was not surprised. I had trouble with a bronze gear which meshes with the camshaft and drives the Distributor through a long vertical shaft at the rear of the engine. These are also no longer available but my good friend, and fellow Cadillac club member Bernie Brooks came to the rescue (again). The alternative of course would be to get say 10 or 20 manufactured in Australia, and then sell them to other members who have this era car and recoup the manufacturing and set-up costs of a small production run. But fortunately I did not have to resort to this.

I purchased a deluxe engine rebuild kit from Kanter's in the US. This kit gave me just about everything I needed for the rebuild. And it worked out cheaper than buying the individual items separately. The kit included pistons, rings, all bearings, a new camshaft, gaskets, timing chain, and timing gears, and welch plugs. Also in the kit were valves, valve guides and springs, and an overhaul kit for the oil pump. I also purchased a Carter carburettor overhaul kit, thrust block and pilot bearing. And then the cleaning, machining, and assembly started in earnest.



LEFT: THIS PHOTO SHOWS THE ENGINE BEING ASSEMBLED. THE BLOCK WAS BORED OUT .020 INCHES FROM THE STANDARD LASALLE ENGINE DIAMETER.

The block and heads were sent to Bendigo where they were dipped and cleaned. That's the theory anyway but when the block returned a thorough examination showed that a lot of sludge remained in the bottom of the water passages in the block. These areas were thoroughly cleaned out by the engine builder, who has seen this before over the years. So the message here is make sure the block is thoroughly cleaned before you start the assembly otherwise you will get ongoing overheating and radiator clogging problems. The distributor was checked out by a local Central Victorian specialist and found to be from a later model '40s Cadillac fitted with vacuum advance, and in excellent condition. This specialist was very impressed with the Cadillac quality and spent some time cleaning up and cosmetically restoring the distributor as you can see in the accompanying photo.

THE RESTORED DISTRIBUTOR MOUNTED ON THE ENGINE. YOU CAN SEE THE OLD STYLE CAP WITH THE SCREWED IN FITTINGS ON THE PLUG LEADS, AND THE RESTORED BODY AND DELCO-REMY BADGE.



The remainder of the engine assembly was relatively straight forward. After assembly the engine was sprayed with Bill Hirsch engine enamel in the genuine Cadillac/LaSalle green for 1937. This is a high quality enamel and the resulting colour looks just right. Also at this stage I decided to have the "highly visible" exhaust manifold treated by Jet Hot Coatings in Castlemaine, Victoria with a Satin Black high temperature coating instead of the vitreous enamelling originally applied, as in my opinion it is far more durable.

So at last everything was going to plan and we were going to finally get the engine back in the chassis. But no such luck. That Mechanic's assistant "Murphy" was about to strike again! During a final inspection of the bell housing we discovered a serious crack in the face of the housing which can partially be seen in the photo below. An attempt had been made to fill the crack with body filler but we were concerned about the integrity of the assembly as this area of the bell housing locates the sleeve covering the gearbox input shaft, and also aligns the thrust block (or throw-out bearing).



**THIS PHOTO SHOWS THE
CRACK IN THE BELL HOUSING
AND THE POOR ATTEMPT TO
REPAIR IT.**

So back to my friend and Cadillac/LaSalle spare parts guru, Bernie Brooks for a 1937 bell housing which he had and which we delivered to the engine rebuilder in a few days, much to his amazement. It was cleaned up, checked out, painted and fitted to the engine. Interestingly, although all the critical dimensions were identical to the original cracked unit, there were some variations in both the casting detail, and some of the drilled and or tapped holes. The rest of the project went together as planned. The new, reproduction hydraulic lifters were bench tested and performed perfectly under a hydraulic test of the rebuilt oil pump and oiling system.

The engine fired up beautifully first time with no strange noises which meant we could all sleep well that night! The engine rebuilder suggested I dyno-test the LaSalle at a facility here in Central Victoria where he tests his racing car engines. At first I was dubious, as the car ran well by my standards. Anyway what's a bit more money in an expensive process such as an engine rebuild, so in the end I relented. Well the first test showed that the timing was slightly too advanced, and also showed that the newly rebuilt Carter carburettor was running rich on both idle and throughout the speed range of the engine. So adjustments were made to the metering rods and then the car was re-tested. And what a difference these minor adjustments made to the car! From the first drive of the car I noticed a big improvement in the power produced, as well as the absence of any engine noise, but after the dynamometer test the engine was far more responsive. I'm sure it will make a difference to the fuel economy but unfortunately I did not perform an economy test before the dyno tuning. I have since covered over 300 miles with the rebuilt motor and I'm like a kid with a new toy! The engine, engine bay and engine accessories were all finished to a high standard by the engine rebuilder even though it was never my intention to achieve a high spec finish. The photo below shows the engine bay as it is now.



So hopefully I will have many years of trouble-free motoring following all this work over the past 12 months. Driving the LaSalle now feels just like driving a new car, with everything tight, smooth and silent, the way a good Cadillac/LaSalle should be.

DETAILS OF SPECIALISTS AND SUPPLIERS.

Deluxe Engine Overhaul Kit – Kanter Auto Products, 76 Monroe Street, Boonton, NJ 07005 USA. Tel: 800-526-1096 www.kanter.com

Water Pump Rebuild – Auto Cooling Pty Ltd, 7/216 Blackshaws Road, Altona North Vic 3025 Tel: 03 9362 7799 E: autocooling@bigpond.com Kim McLean.

Clutch Check and Repair – BGT Brake and Clutch Services, 10 Webster Street, Dandenong Vic 3175 Tel: 03 9794 6787 E: derry@bgtbrakes.com Derry Robertson.

Engine Paint – Bill Hirsch Auto. 396 Littleton Avenue, Newark, NJ87103, USA Tel: 800 828 2061 (Toll Free) E: HIRSCHAUTO@aol.com Bill Hirsch.

NOS Con Rods – Egge Machine Co.11707 Slauson Ave, Santa Fe Springs, California 90670

USA. Tel: 800-866-3443 ext 22, Fax: 562-693-1635

Exhaust Manifold – JET-HOT Coatings Australia, 26 Elizabeth Street, Castlemaine, VIC 3450. Tel: 1800 700 468

Distributor Rebuild – Ignition Developments, PO Box 367, Maldon, Vic 3463.

DISCLAIMER.

The above companies provided very good service to me, however there may be other companies both here and in the US that could provide an equivalent service.

GEOFF POLLARD

6b) History of LaSalle Part 13, 1939

"No, I didn't get rich – I just got wise!" along with "And the price speaks my language, too!" were two of the slogans used in economic recession hit America in the Fall of 1938 when the 1939 models were introduced.

Although the sales brochures presented all models with whitewall tyres, on the showroom floor the LaSalle was presented very conservatively with black wall tyres and a lack of accessories. *6c below does show white wall tyres...Ed*

By 1939 the LaSalle was again a solid winner in the marketplace, and the '39 model is,



The unmistakable front of the 1939 LaSalle

arguably, the best of the post- 1933 LaSalles. For 1939 only, GM engineers cut the LaSalle wheelbase to 120 inches (3048mm), which gave the car a much more manoeuvrable feel than the 124-inch-wheelbase '38 model or the 123-inch-wheelbase '40 model. Of course, the LaSalle offered terrific styling keyed by its signature stand-up grille that was less than 12 inches (30 cm) across but nearly three feet (one metre) high and made of a one-piece diecast metal. A grille was also located on either side of the centre radiator grille between the hood and front fenders on what is called the "catwalk". The headlights were located on the side of the radiator

and hood and the "windsplits" were placed along the side of the light housing instead of on top as with the 1938 model. The '39 coupe is considered to be one of the best-looking cars of the era.

The amount of glass was increased by 27% giving the overall appearance of the LaSalle a more sculptured look. Stainless steel trim was placed around each window opening similar to the 1938 Cadillac 60 Special convertible-like windows. All but the lower front door hinge were concealed.

The radiator was now tube and fin in place of the cellular radiator core. The vacuum for the crankcase ventilation was generated by the motion of the car instead of the engine intake system.

Instead of having the V-8 emblem on the grille, it was moved to each hood side ventilator grille and the "LaSalle" script was placed on the radiator grille. A black field instead of the red field containing the branding iron type "LaS" on the hubcaps; the "LaS" was not used anywhere else on the car.

A new style instrument panel was introduced with a narrow, horizontal, rectangular and symmetrical motif. The glass over the speedometer, radio and clock dials was slightly convex and rounded.

Rumble seats in Coupes and Convertible Coupes were seen to be from a by-gone era and were no longer available. Fold up seats were mounted inside. Two things that were options for this year were the side mounted spare tyres and the running boards.



The dash of the 1939 LaSalle

Plastic had come into vogue and most of the interior accoutrements were made from plastic except for the diecast chromed radio grille located at the centre of the dashboard.

There were five body styles available and a new "Sunshine Turret Top" roof was available on the two- and four-door sedans. The idea had come from the British motoring industry and was offered on both Cadillac and LaSalle models from 1938 to 1941. The General Motors division producing body trim hardware was the Ternstedt Manufacturing Company who had the patents for the "Sunshine Turret Top" assigned to them.

Sunroof cars were only built on special order, with about half of the total 1,509 built being 1939 models. Today's "Moon Roof" and "Astro Roof" are greatly improved variations, but trace their origins to the "Sunshine Turret Top" roof.

The 322 cubic inch, 125 horsepower, V-8 engine introduced in 1937 was to power the 1939 model. It was known for its dependability and whisper-quiet performance. The power plant was a wonder of low-end torque. This meant that the car could accelerate without a stutter from five miles per hour or so, making gear-shifting through its column-mounted shifter a reasonably infrequent occurrence. While around-town driving was its forte, the LaSalle had a top speed of close to 100 miles per hour.



1939 LaSalle Dealer Post Card

The serial numbers were on the left frame side bar opposite the steering gear and the serial numbers and the engine numbers were the same. The engine numbers were on the crankshaft just behind the left cylinder block and parallel to the dash. The

numbers started at 2290001 and ended at 2313028.

1939 LaSalle Series 39-50 (L-Head 90o V-8)

Bore: 3 3/8"

Stroke: 4 1/2"

Displacement: 322 cu.in.

Compression ratio: 6.25:1

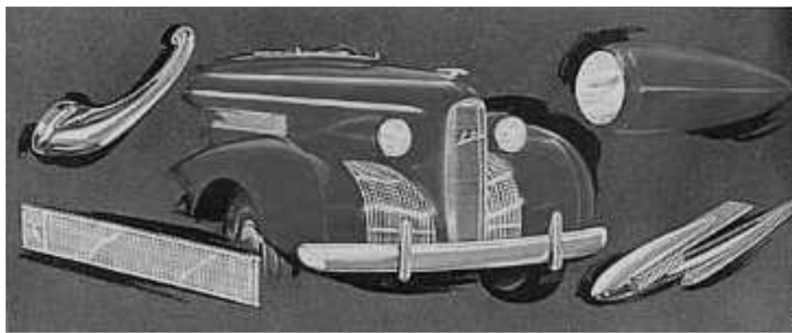
Brake HP: 125 BHP @ 3400 rpm

Wheel bases: 120" and 156" (commercial chassis)

Total units built: 22,001 (one source), 23,002 {Van Gelderen}, 23,028 (Ackerson)

Price range: \$1,240 - \$1,895

Introduced: October 1938



Principal Styling
Features 1939 LaSalle



Principal features:

- New, long, very narrow, rounded grille with "LaSalle" script
- New, hood side louvers (thin horizontal ribbing)
- New, streamlined headlights with horizontal ridge moved back to radiator sides
- Column-mounted gear-shift lever
- "LaS" medallion in centre of front bumper
- Fisher, "Unisteel, Turret Top" roof
- Split-V windshield
- Sun roof optional (later dropped owing to leak problems)
- Independent "Knee-action" front suspension
- Fender-mounted spare wheels (optional)
- Redesigned piston rings
- No more rumble seat on convertible coupe (two interior opera seats instead).
- Thin, horizontal-mesh grille
- New, front fender apron (cat-walk) grille
- One-piece, "alligator-jaw" hood, hinged at rear
- Gold-coloured "V8" symbol at upper RH side of grille
- Running boards now optional on request
- 27% increase in glass area all round
- Streamlined, "bullet" tail-lights
- Hydraulic brakes
- Disc wheel covers
- Redesigned rear suspension

Body Styles

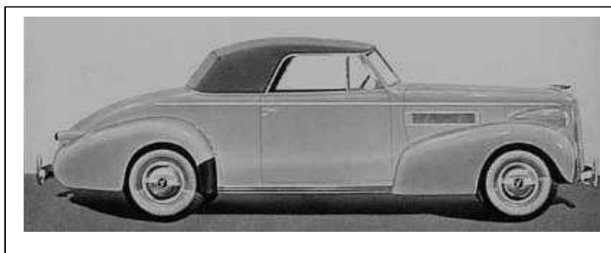
All Fisher bodies on 120"(3048mm) wheel base (in ascending order of rarity)



*Style #5019, five-passenger, 4-door Sedan,
3,740lbs, \$1,320 (15,935 built, 252
of which were exported)*



*Style #5027, 2-4 passenger, 2-door
Coupe, 3,635lbs \$1,240 (3,531 built)*



*Style #5067, 2-4 passenger, 2-door
Convertible Coupe, \$1,395 (1,044 built of
which 24 were exported)*



*Style 5011, five passenger, 2-door
Sedan, 3,710lbs, \$1,280 (977 built)*

Although the 1939 LaSalle was stylish and performed well, its place in the GM marketing line-up was becoming less secure. Even so, sales again climbed in 1939 to 23,028 an increase of a whopping 41% over the previous year and outstripping the parent company by over 9,000 units but not as good as Packard.

So you can see the LaSalle marque didn't cease to exist because it faced year after year of dwindling sales. Success was killing the car. GM was a much bigger outfit than Packard, and its management naturally had much bigger expectations.

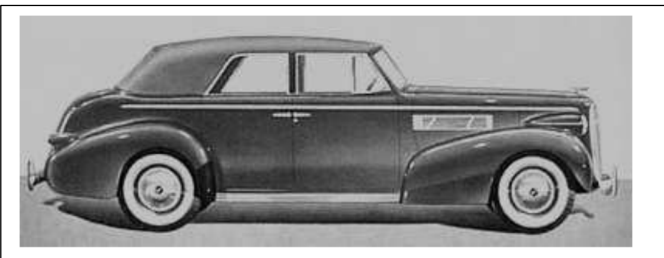
In this light, LaSalle's 1939 model year volume was judged below par, so the decision was duly made to cancel Cadillac's "companion" after 1940. They felt the public realized that Cadillac quality was available in a medium-priced car and they would have nothing to gain by purchasing the Series 62 Cadillac. Mr. Average Citizen driving a 'cheap' Cadillac could easily destroy their image of America's finest automobile.



*Style #5019-A, 5-passenger, 4-door Sunroof
Sedan, 3,740lbs, \$1,320
(404 built, of which 24 were exported)*



Style #5011-A, five-passenger, 2-door Sunroof Sedan, 3,710lbs, \$1,317.50 (23 built)



Style #5029, five-passenger, 4-door Convertible Sedan, \$1,825 (185 built)

Bare chassis (5 built), costing \$985 each
 Commercial chassis (874 built), costing \$1,020 each
 Unidentified: 24 units

Australia: Here is a story, submitted by Noel Rickerby of Geraldton, Western Australia, about his Holden built 1939 LaSalle. Receiving stories about LaSalles for the current year that is the subject of "The Story of the LaSalle" gives LaCad readers an idea of the dedication of owners of these beautiful cars.

My 1939 LaSalle by Noel Rickerby

In March 2007, as a result of a routine examination I was diagnosed with colon cancer. A decision was made to finish work. I have always had a passion for good cars and intended purchasing a Lamborghini if I had a time limit; however, after an operation and commencing chemotherapy, I felt I was one of the lucky ones.

I started looking for a vintage vehicle which resulted in late May 2007 I purchased a 1939 LaSalle through e-Bay. It was in the Hunter region of New South Wales. Transport was arranged by the seller and it arrived by Autotrans in Perth, Western Australia. I went with Kate, my wife, the 450 kilometers from Geraldton to Perth - I was anxious to see the condition it was in. I was thrilled that it started with the first turn of the key! Then a short 10 Km drive to our son's house to do a full inspection. The state of the car far exceeded my expectations. It was in original state - un-restored - just a few alterations. I felt confident that it would drive the 450 kilometers to Geraldton.

Two weeks later with the help of our son Richard, we drove it to Geraldton with only a slight overheating problem - it travelled beautifully. I was still in the middle of my chemotherapy treatment but the excitement helped me through the 900 kilometers round journey in the one day.

I then put the LaSalle over the pits for registration. This lasted 1¼ hours with only a couple of minor items to be remedied. Returning to the pits a couple of days later, was another 1¼ hrs - I was wondering what the inspector was about. I then realised he was

just fascinated with the mechanics of it. I have since found that this is one of the last Holden-built body LaSalle cars, built in Adelaide.

Rare vehicles fascinate most people as they do me. I recently purchased a 1924 Diatto vintage special from Gympie in Queensland. This time we drove to Gympie to collect it – a 10,000 kilometers 11-day round trip with a car trailer to bring it to Geraldton.



Noel's 1939 LaSalle Series 50 Sedan

Amazingly amongst the Diatto paperwork there was a centerfold out of the magazine "Restored Cars" No 52 showing the Diatto at the second "Bay to Birdwood" run in Adelaide in 1982. This centerfold had 17 photos of the 966 entries. I noticed a 1939 LaSalle with a SA registration which matches the registration held by the LaSalle I have in my shed. So after 27 years these cars are now in the same stable! It is quite amazing the coincidences that happen in life - as with people so with cars

the six degree of separation is proved again!!!
N E Rickerby, August 2009

The 1939 LaSalle in Australia, by Peter Ratcliff

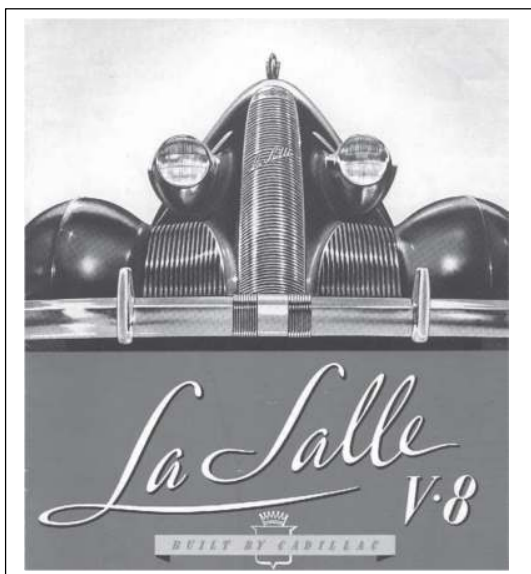


For 1939 there were only 24 RHD chassis imported to Australia, quite a drop from the previous two (2) years. All of these chassis had Holden-built four-door sedan bodies fitted to them and were sold here as a luxury car at a recommended price of £765. Curiously Matt Larson's records of Cadillac factory build sheets show there were also five (5) LaSalle convertible chassis sent to Australia.



This was my car for many years, so here is a photo of it. One of 1156 convertibles built, this one came down the Detroit assembly line RHD in March 1939, and was sold in Melbourne to a wealthy industrialist in May. I have since sold the car but I still have that number plate.

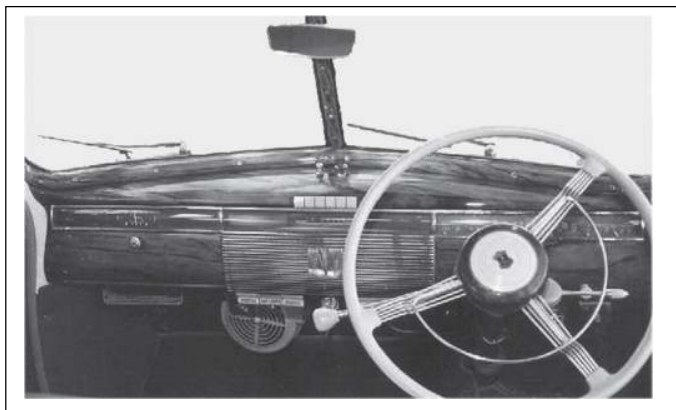
In the absence of any sign of these in the years that I have been investigating such things, I can only guess that these may have been destined for use as hearses or some other special purpose vehicle. Unless of course the convertibles were complete cars, like the one I owned for 25 years. The story I was told was that three (3) 1939 convertible LaSalles came to Australia – two (2) to Melbourne and one (1) to Sydney. The Sydney car was displayed at the 1939 motor show and spent the next 40 years in Sydney until being sold to a visiting American and taken to the US where it was rodded.



My car was sold new in Melbourne and had 10 owners before me, and is still in Melbourne now. I was told that a third car was written off in a major accident in Melbourne in the fifties and was not repaired. No other original-delivery 1939 convertibles have come to light that I know of.

The front of the rare Aussie 1939 LaSalle brochure dramatises the narrow centre grille

Again the LaSalle in the US shared the Buick-Olds bodies in sedans, coupes, convertibles and convertible sedans. The bodies were new for 1939 and were of all-steel construction, riding on a 120-inch wheelbase that was four inches shorter than the previous year's. Windows were larger for better visibility, and American sedans (Fisher bodies) had a one-piece rear window. Fisher bodied sedans also offered a sliding sunroof as an option in 1939. The rumble seat had disappeared from coupes and convertibles, as a pair of folding opera seats in the rear of the interior took their place.



This is the Right Hand Drive dash fitted to Holden bodied cars. Note the plastic blank for the radio pushbuttons that were not offered in Aussie LaSalle's. This is Chris Sultana's LaSalle, snapped in Sydney in 1999.

A pushbutton radio was optional in US Cadillacs and LaSalle's and it gave a wonderful tone.



Sydney member Kevin Liddy imported this nice original coupe in 1992. Very few 1939 LaSalle's have arrived in the American car import frenzy of the past 20 years.

Running boards became optional, with the delete option being a panel with three handsome strips hiding the chassis from the viewer. The 125 horsepower V8 and the sturdy manual gearbox were largely unchanged.



The rear seat area in a Holden bodied LaSalle as illustrated in the Australian brochure. The upholstery was all leather, with armrests at sides and centre, and ashtrays and lighters galore.

Holden claimed the windscreen in their locally built sedan body was 21% bigger, giving noticeably improved vision (and less of the porthole look of previous models). I believe all LaSalle bodies built by Holden had leather upholstery, whereas this was not offered in US LaSalle closed cars.



I owned this fine pair of Australian delivered 1939 LaSalles. The imported convertible was sold new in Melbourne and was restored over a period of 11 years, while the Holden bodied sedan was delivered new to Bourke, NSW and was restored in Melbourne. It now belongs to Chris Sultana in Sydney. Photo Melbourne 1990.

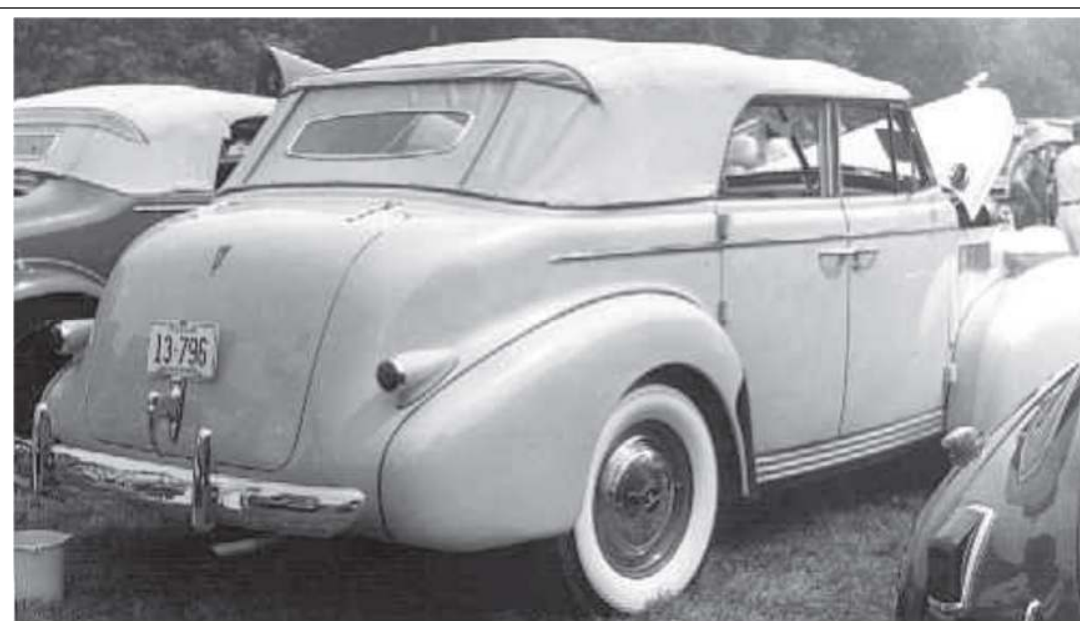


Another surviving Aussie sedan, this one has been mostly restored by Greg Waller and is now gleaming black. Greg bought it from life Member Bill Spraggon who had owned another 1939 LaSalle some years ago. It now shares garage space with the black 1939 Cadillac of the late Ken Moss. (This sedan is now owned by John and Chris Byrden, refer 7a below.....Ed)



This surviving original LaSalle sedan demonstrates the Holden body that was shared with Buick and the larger series Oldsmobile and Pontiac. It has a two-piece rear window and Buick side trim, but LaSalle taillights, boot handle, etc.

This car was owned in South Australia from new until 2002 when Geoff Stayches from Moe bought it. It has had a couple of owners since then.



A 1939 LaSalle convertible sedan snapped at Dearborn, Michigan in 1983, one of only 185 built



Rear view of a convertible coupe. Although rodded with a 500 cu.i. engine, air-conditioning, etc, this car displays correct LaSalle appearance except for later wire wheels and a smaller rear window.

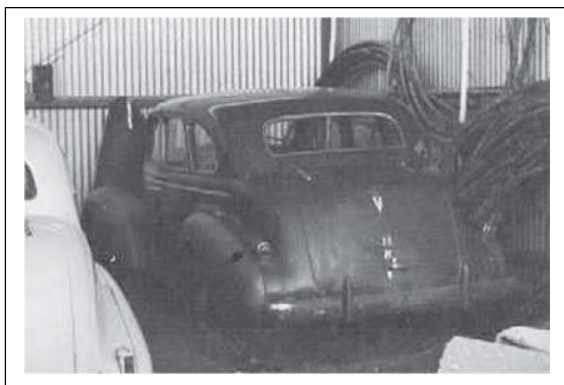
Photo at Louisville, Kentucky in 2002, and the car had been driven from Richmond, Indiana.



This is the Fisher bodied sedan. The most apparent difference is the one piece rear window, but the shorter side trim and embossed bumper are also noticeable. This photo was taken at Dearborn, Michigan in 1983.



A very rare Fisher body - a LaSalle two-door sedan with a factory sliding sunroof. It would be surprising if a handful of these were built with a sunroof, and survivors would be few indeed. This one was at the Petersen museum in Los Angeles in 2002.

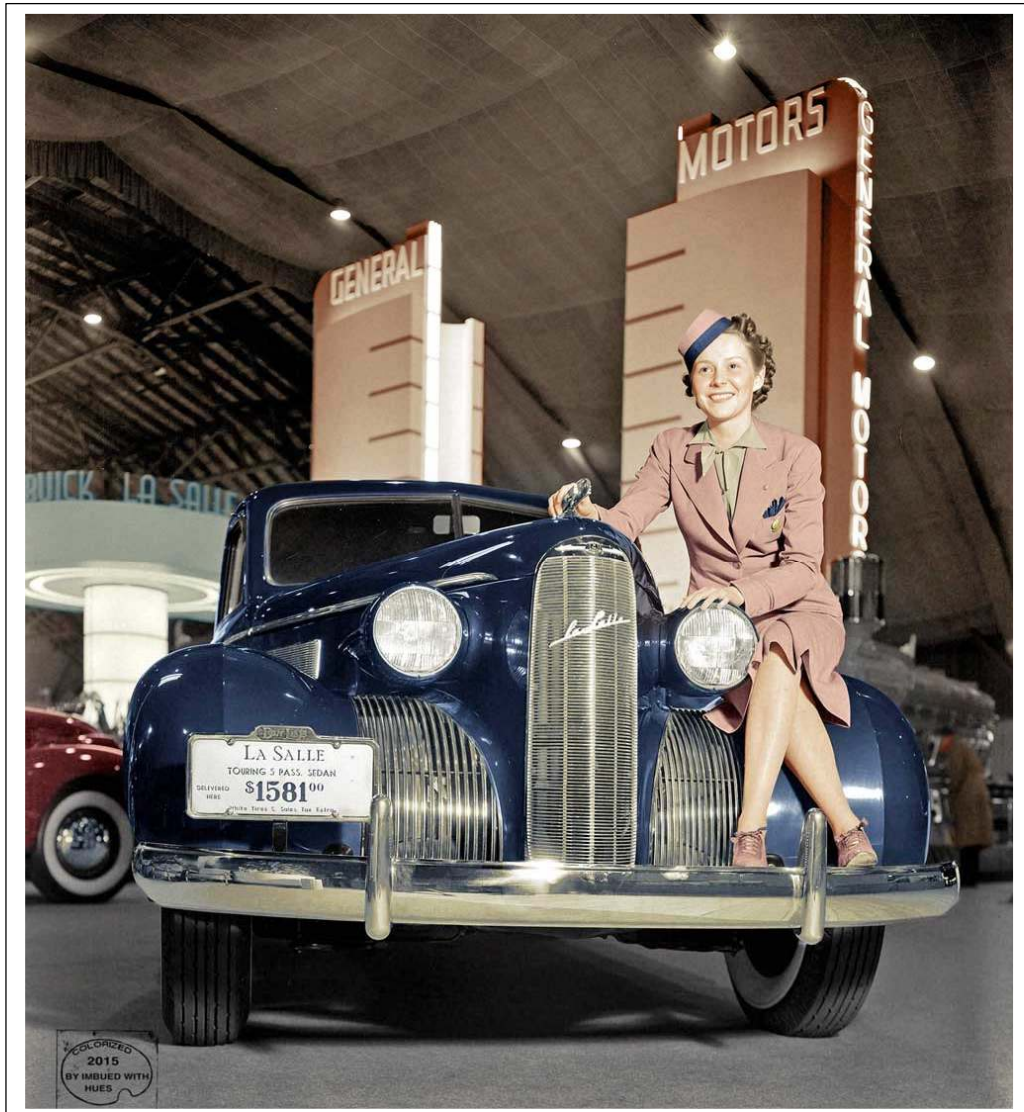


The car on the right is a Fisher bodied sedan, RHD and resident near Wagga, NSW. It shares this shed with its nearest competitor in speed, an Aussie 1940 Buick Century. Photo taken April 2000.



End of Part 13 of "The History of LaSalle", an extract from LaCad Spring 2009

6c) 1939 Publicity.



Thanks to Ronnie Hux, Avondale, PA who sent in the following dealership photos...Ed

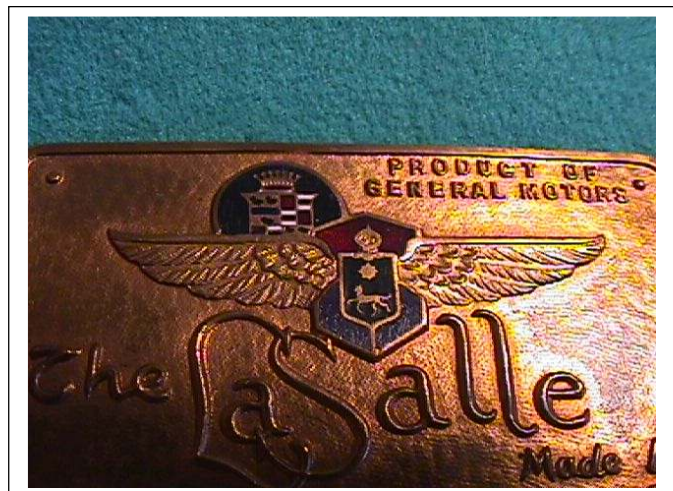




6d) LaSalle Badge.

Bob Blaurock recently acquired the brass emblem below but is not aware of what it was used for.

Can anyone assist in providing details on its history. The badge is approximately 2 ½ by 1 ¾ inches and has a very nice enamel logo.



7 Members Cars

7a) Jack and Nancy and John and Chris' 39 LaSalles

As this edition is focused on the year 1939 I have taken the liberty to show the Hotz and Byrden sedans....Ed



Jack advised "We were going through some old pictures and found this one taken in front of our vacation house in the mountains in 1994. When we and the car were both in better shape. I ran it in the summer with the side panels off to enhance the cooling."



Same view but this is a Holden bodied RHD LaSalle

7b) Jack's 1940 5067 CCP

Jack Murray from Connecticut sent in the photo below. I understand that there are no more than half a dozen dual side mount convertibles in 1940. A super rare car that really looks the part.

Thanks Jack for sending in the photo...Ed



7c) 2017 Grand National LaSalles

Jack Hotz provided the following details, in no particular order, with more to come in subsequent editions of Sallee Speaks.



This is a
1940 5019 4
door sedan
belonging to
James
Stainbury 3rd
of Waverly,
Virginia.



This beige 1938 coupe belongs to Orin Kerr of Arlington, VA



1937 LaSalle Coupe owned by Bill Aprile of Bohemia, NY



This is a 1940 5219 LaSalle belongs to John Bertelone of Sterling Heights, Michigan

08/02/2017



owner Dennis Buchholz of Crestwood, Kentucky. Very nice 1939 5067

08/04/2017



8 Merchandise

Please refer to the previous Sallee Speaks for the latest Merchandise details.

9 Cadillac LaSalle Chronical

If you are not currently receiving CLC, formally LaSalle Information Line, then contact Lorne Scott via seabreeze28@gmail.com and he will put you on the CLC mailing list.

10 LAS Chapter Report

Please refer to the previous Sallee Speaks for the latest Chapter Report, June 2017, forwarded by Nancy Hotz, LAS Secretary and Membership Chairperson

11 Minutes of the latest LAS Meeting and Treasurer's report

Minutes of the LAS Chapter Meeting, Friday, August 4, 2017 10-11 AM at the Fowler Room- Hilton Hotel- Tysons Corner, McLeans, VA

Attended by:

Bud and Barbara Coleman (PA) - 1940 sedan,

Rich Nalavany (NJ) - 1938 5011 2 door sedan,

John Bertolone (MI) - 1940 5219 4 door sedan,

Warner Young (IN) - 1940 5219 4 door sedan,

Tom Hoesyk (IN) - 1939 50-carved side hearse

Bill and Melanie Porter (FL) - 1940 50 4 door sedan convertible

George Stockman (MI) - 1940 5019 4 door sedan

Roy Sea (FL) - 1940 5267

Cliff Woodbury (PA) - (still looking),

Jim Hughes (CT) - 1936 coupe, 1937 4 door sedan

Randy Denchfield (MD) - 37 Coupe,

Mark Dwyer (NC) - (none at present)

(Note: Due to Nancy and Jack being heavily involved with the running of this GN, Barbara and Bud Coleman kindly directed this years' meeting.)

Bud called the meeting to order and began by asking those present to introduce themselves and tell us something about their car(s). This always proves very interesting because it gives members a chance to become acquainted with one another and with their cars. It also gives folks an opportunity to ask questions, particularly when it comes to discussing difficult parts to locate or problems to solve. With such a nice turnout of people it took up most of the meeting time.

Cliff Woodbury also talked about the Grand Classic that will be held in May of 2018 in Gettysburg, PA. He then invited all LaSalle Members, promising to reserve a spot on the showfield for LaSalles in attendance.

With everyone having things to do and places to go, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted, Barbara Coleman, LAS Treasurer and Marketing Chairperson.

Treasury Report

The LAS Chapter is constantly trying to keep dues costs down and generate funds for newsletter costs by selling logo merchandise. Most often this merchandise is available only through the Internet or by phone once it has been viewed in the Chapter newsletter, The Sallee Speaks. Sometimes the merchandise is advertised in the National publication, The Self Starter.

It must be noted that the Chapter usually takes a table at the GN Meets. This year Barbara Coleman set up a table displaying merchandise for sale and was taking orders for items not available at the show. She also recruited some new Chapter Members. For some people it meant saving postage on their purchases.

Please keep this in mind when you are attending GN meets, especially those LAS members who live out of the country. Support your Chapter by showing off your LAS logo merchandise.

12 LAS Treasure Chest

Further treasures can be found within the Cadillac LaSalle Chronical organized by Lorne Scott as documented above in para 9. There are no items in this edition.

13 In Closing

As always, I do hope you continually enjoy the articles in Sallee Speaks and again a warm welcome to all our new members.

Articles, articles, articles, I do need them from members if I am to continue the content variety I have been able to achieve to date.

Now lets finish with the positive comment in Jack's address about the noticeable increase in young members at the latest Grand National. This is great news.