

# Tucson Auto Museum



NOV 2022 Newsletter

## Tucson Auto Museum

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Tucson, AZ  
[Tucsonautomuseum.com](http://Tucsonautomuseum.com)



# New Car in the Museum

## 1929 Duesenberg Model J Arlington Sedan

Specs: 420 cid DOHC, 32-valve inline eight-cylinder engine, 265 HP, three-speed manual transmission, solid front and live rear axles with semi-elliptic leaf springs, four-wheel vacuum-assisted hydraulic drum brakes; wheelbase 142.5”

- Auburn Cord Duesenberg Club Certified Category 1, D-158
- Original short-wheelbase chassis, engine, firewall, and body
- Sold new in Paris to famed Duesenberg connoisseur Antonio Chopitea
- Early ownership by prominent world aristocrats
- Cosmetically refinished example with original interior

Renowned coachbuilder, Derham Body Company of Rosemont, Pennsylvania, produced some of the finest bodies for the Duesenberg Model J, built with exceptional craftsmanship and quality. Among their offerings was a particularly elegant and well-proportioned sedan with blind rear quarters, of the style dubbed by other coachbuilders as a sport or club sedan. It was distinguished by a relatively low, fabric-covered roofline and close-coupled doors. The design was named the Arlington, and five were made, four of them on the most desirable short-wheelbase 142½-inch chassis.

### Upcoming Events

Cops & Rodders Car Show  
Nov 5, 2022

Red Sleigh Toy Run  
Nov 19, 2022

The Derham Arlington Sedan offered here, engine number J-164, was built as a left-hand-drive, short-wheelbase chassis. Longtime ACD Club Duesenberg Historian Ray Wolff records its original sale on July 3, 1931, to Antonio Chopitea, a Peruvian sugar heir and noted automobile enthusiast; he and his brothers would acquire no fewer than five new Model Js, including, most notably, the renowned Figoni-bodied “French Speedster.” Chopitea maintained homes in Lima, Paris, and New York, and it is likely that this American-bodied J was bought in the latter and then taken overseas by its owner.

The car subsequently passed to "Prince Otto," Archduke Franz of Hapsburg, in Paris, the last Crown Prince of Austria-Hungary – who was then scarcely 30 years old. The next owner is recorded as a George J. Gould of Vaucresson, likely the American railroad and banking heir George Jay Gould II, and finally, in 1935, one Prince Hassan Loutfallah, of Cairo, Egypt. It is likely that at the time of the latter acquisition the car was fitted with its current fenders, of a more modern skirted design, and was refinished in dark blue.

Duesenberg historian Fred Roe, in a letter in the car’s ACD Club Certification file, noted that Prince Loutfallah’s nephew Alex Sursock inherited the car in 1948. The Sursock wealth was based in Lebanon, where they were hugely influential in the growth of the country, but Alex had resided in Cairo and was left nearly destitute when the Nasser Government claimed his family’s property, including the vast Gezirah Palace where his uncle had resided. Sursock settled with the Duesenberg, one of his few remaining possessions, at Cap d’Antibes, in

southern France, where he lived out his days.

In 1957, the Model J was brokered for Sursock by his neighbor's son George Breyton to Allen Thurn of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, a noted early Model J enthusiast and collector who sourced several outstanding examples of this era. Mr. Thurn resold the car within two years to Keith Smith of Michigan, who displayed it at the ACD Club National Reunion here in Auburn in 1959, then sold it in late 1963 to Bruce Cox of Detroit and Florida. Mr. Cox would be a long-term owner of the Duesenberg, possessing it for over two decades.

The McGowan brothers, renowned 'car hunters' of Branford, Connecticut, bought J-164 from Mr. Cox in 1984 and retained it until the early 1990s; in 1993 they exhibited it again at the National Reunion, winning Most Original Car. In 1995, the car returned to Auburn, Indiana to stay with Gary and Sharon Vick. The Vicks resided in E.L. Cord's former residence on Wayne Street, not far from the ACD Automobile Museum, and were active supporters of both the museum and the ACD Festival. They maintained a small, select collection of oft-driven automobiles, including a twelve-cylinder Auburn, a Tucker, and, of course, J-164, which early in their ownership continued to be maintained in very original and unrestored condition, suitable for today's preservation class in shows and exhibitions. Later, the Vicks relocated to Texas, and elected to have the Model J refinished to its original burgundy livery, though the car continued to retain, as it does today, much of the original interior in good, patinated condition. Passionate enthusiasts, they continued to enjoy driving it, including trips from Texas back to Auburn, Indiana for the annual meet.

Since its acquisition by The Rockhound Collection, the Duesenberg has remained largely on display in the collection's museum, a great favorite of visitors who admire its handsome lines.





## Recent highlights

- We hosted first responders from TPD for a free day at the museum with their families. We thank all Tucson area first responders for the hard work they put in every day.
- We hosted the Italian Car Club of Tucson as well as the Phoenix chapter of the Alfa Romeo Car Club. They came as part of their monthly outing.
- If you would like to book a car club outing, please contact the museum directly.
- Make sure to follow us on our socials!  
Instagram- Tucson\_auto\_museum and find us on Facebook- Tucson Auto Museum.

## Our next area of focus

We are looking for volunteers! We have several opportunities available for people looking to get out there and fill their free time with some fun volunteer opportunities within the museum.

**Homefront:** Museum Liaison for the Homefront area. Answer questions about the cars, know about the historical background on the various vehicles.

**Information Desk:** Greet and count visitors entering the Museum. Direct visitors to areas around Museum. Answer general questions.

**Vehicle Restoration:** Dust off vehicles, clean windows, direction from the museum's mechanic for any other restoration help.

Please reach out to the museum manager if you would like to volunteer within our museum. [ccarr@tucsonautomuseum.com](mailto:ccarr@tucsonautomuseum.com)



