



JANUARY 6-14, 1990

## Tradition reigns for 90 years

"We in the transportation industry are the most envied businessmen on earth. No other activity of an industrial nature is as much discussed or so frequently in the public consciousness. Somehow it is a fundamental human trait to be excessively proud of a handsome, worthy conveyance and to communicate that pride to the neighbors."

— C.W. Matheson, general sales manager, Dodge Brothers (1930)

**O**BVIOUSLY, Matheson came from an era preceding the Environmental Protection Agency, intense international competition and the ever-changing stresses which envelop the global automotive marketplace of the 1990s.

Yet, if you ask Roger Smith, Donald Petersen and Lee Iacocca if they can relate to the enthusiasm and pride exhibited by this early industry executive, we would guess that they would agree.

After all, more than 1,000 automotive executives who will descend upon Detroit's Cobo Hall for the 1990 North American International Show now in progress, realize the technological scope of the automotive industry has been driven by the forceful, can-do attitude which transcend mere public personas.

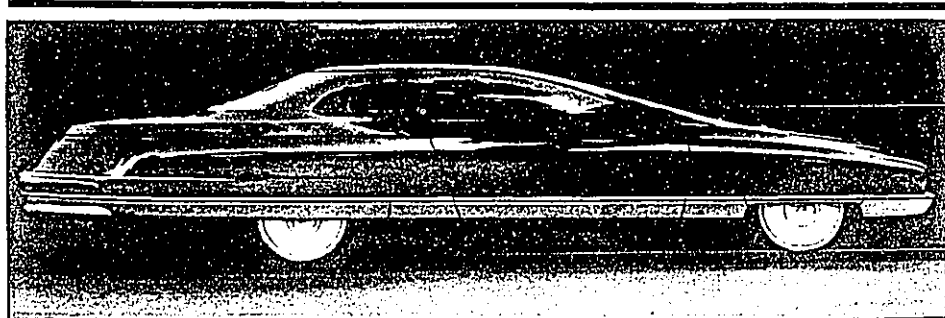
For every John Dodge and Henry Ford on the automotive horizon, there was a C.W. Matheson who translated the research, design, preparation and quality of the final product into sales for a hungry motoring public.

The 1990 North American International Auto Show, sponsored by the Detroit Auto Dealers Association (DADA), shares many common traits with pre-"Motor City" automotive shows of the early 1900s.

**THE GOAL THEN,** as now, was to create interest in an ever-changing industry to inspire the curious spirit of potential automotive customers, and ultimately, sell them a car.

The pioneer and founding fathers of Detroit's automotive shows was a bicycle salesman, William E. Metzger.

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Cadillac's newest concept car, Solitaire, combines sleek aerodynamics and advanced engineering concepts, including a V-12 engine, for the ultimate personal luxury automobile. Among its many advanced features are doors equipped with hinges that electronically slide the door forward and out for easier access. A single sheet of glass that darkens automatically in sunlight stretches from the cowl to lock panel.

## Gearing up

### Cars, entertainment share spotlight

**T**IM AND Ann Barrett, in need of a minivan for their expanding family, took a little different approach to shopping for a new vehicle.

"This was our first time entering the family-car market," said Tim, a 29-year-old print production coordinator. "Neither Ann nor myself knew what to look for, so we figured the auto show (in Detroit) was the best place to start. It contained all the information we needed under one roof."

Actually, the Barretts' shopping method is rather common. More than 70 percent of the surveyed attendees at the Detroit Auto Show (now officially known as the North American International Auto Show in Detroit) buy vehicles within the following year, according to a 1988 survey by John Gilmore & Associates Ltd. For the Barretts, however, it only took one month to buy that minivan.

This year the Barretts plan on taking part in another trend — going back to the auto show for its entertainment value.

**"ALTHOUGH WE ALREADY** own a new van, we had such a good time last year we'll be back for the 1990 show," said Ann Barrett, 29, a contract administrator.

And the Barrett family's latest addition, 10-month-old Hannah, won't need a sitter when her parents head down to Cobo Hall. The 1990 show will attract even the littlest Barrett.

In fact, the 1990 auto show is continuing the family-event tradition established by the Detroit Auto Show, appealing to little folk, teenagers and adults alike, according to David Fisch-

er, co-chairman of the 1990 show.

"The auto show in 1990 is the best entertainment \$5 can buy," said Bob Thibodeau, the other co-chairman. "There will be dance acts, magicians, computer-simulated rides and more."

**OH YES, THERE WILL** be car-galore — enough to satisfy the discriminating tastes in the family. The entertainment is the added bonus that puts the auto show over the top in terms of family amusement.

Singers, dancers and magicians are among the many ways auto displays draw crowds. Chevrolet displays will feature the Rhythm Brothers, a male tap-dancing duo; the Marauding Miners, a "unique act of three male singers and dancers," according to Gale & Rice's Sue Auten; Mark Sweet, a comedian and magician; and a contemporary all-female dance group known as the GEO Dancers.

The Toyota display will include the Team Toyota dancers, who perform on two turntables in the MR2 and Celica display. The Celica will also be the focus of Toyota's 16-foot-high, three-level walk-up display with a nine-foot-high turntable, highlighting the Celica's appeal to sports-oriented and fun-loving lifestyles.

Among the celebrities attending the auto show will be Debbie Turner, who may be seen Jan. 6 packing her 1990 Miss America crown toward the Chevrolet Corvette display. Auto racing enthusiasts will have the opportunity to meet their heroes in the flesh — from the good ol' boys of the NASCAR Winston Cup series to the cosmopolitan stars of the Formula One circuit.

Familiar names include NASCAR's

Bill Elliott and Geoff Bodine, NHRA 1989 Pro Stock champion Bob Glidden, SCCA competitors Tommy Kendall and Dorsey Schroeder, and Formula One's Alessandro Nannini. As an additional bonus, some of the cars that compete on the world's most challenging courses will be on hand.

Burgeoning technology nuts will be impressed by the high-tech Sico Robot in the Lincoln-Mercury display. This wonder of modern technology actually interacts with members of the audience, functioning as conversationalist, stand-up comic and dancer.

The challenge for most auto display personnel, according to Fischer, is successfully mingling family entertainment and automotive marketing needs.

**A MT. RUSHMORE** replica, for example, served as a curtain for an unusual unveiling — the 1989 introduction of the Dodge Dakota pickup, said Tom Kowaleski, Chrysler's manager of product public relations.

The facade of Mt. Rushmore split in the middle between the faces of Lincoln and Washington, allowing a laser light and fog-enveloped Dodge Dakota truck to emerge.

Another concept getting attention these days is interactive displays — exhibits that encourage participation or that expand on product imagery.

At the 1989 Jeep Wrangler display, show goers were encouraged to hunker down behind a simulated steering console. Looking through the windshield, the "driver" would "see" the road and "steer" the vehicle over, around and

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