



## **George Barris: 1925-2015**

George was born in Chicago in the mid twenties. In 1928, he and his older brother Sam moved to Roseville, California with relatives after their parents died. George pursued a passion for building scratch-built aircraft models which led to model cars. He won competitions for construction and design.

The brothers interest in cars intensified during their teenage years as they discovered "the black art" of body work by hanging out after school at local bodyshops, including Brown's and Bertolucci's in Sacramento. George created his first full custom from a used 1936 Ford convertible before he graduated from High School. This automobile lead to their first commercial customer. Shortly after George formed a club called Kustoms Car Club where the first use of "K" for kustoms appeared.

After Sam entered WW II, George moved to Los Angeles where his talents began to flourish. He soon opened his first shop in Bell, a Los Angeles suburb in late 1944. Sam joined him after his discharge in 1945. They opened a new shop on Compton Ave. in Los Angeles. The shop was known as the "Barris Brother's Custom Shop". Sam's natural metal craftsmanship served as a perfect foil to George's desire to design, paint, manage, and promote.

Other forces began to take place around 1947 when the first Hot Rod Show was produced by Robert 'Pete' Petersen founder of Hot Rod magazine. The Barris brothers were asked to exhibit the only custom car in the show. The reaction was very positive.

*(Continued on next page)*





The Barris brothers outgrew their shop on Compton and moved to a larger shop in Lynwood where the famous Hirohata Merc was born.

George formed "Kustoms of Los Angeles," which was initially restricted to Barris customers and later became "Kustoms of America." The group grew out of weekend custom runs which George help put together. Kustoms of America is still a major club today that has a major cruise in Paso Robles.

The movie studios had taken note of Barris kustoms on the streets and at races and came to George for cars for their films. One of the first films Barris made cars for was called "High School Confidential". The success of the initial movie car venture motivated George to seek business in Hollywood.

In the late 50's Revell began making model kits of George's cars. AMT soon joined with the "Ala Kart." Plastic model kits became the biggest selling toys at the time.

In the mid-1960s, George received a call that led to his most momentous gig: The producers of the "Batman" television show needed a heroic ride for the superhero's battles with the Joker.

"I saw the script and it said, 'Bang' 'Pow' 'Boom,' " George told the Los Angeles Times in 2012. "That's exactly what I wanted the car to be able to do. I wanted it to be as big a character as the actors themselves."



Over a period of 15 days and with \$15,000, George transformed a 1955 Lincoln Futura into the go-to method of transportation for crime fighting in Gotham City. Black with red pinstripes, the sleek Batmobile was outfitted with "bulletproof" plexiglass bubble windshields and 450-watt "Bat Ray" laser beams. In 2013, the car was sold at an auction for \$4.6 million.

Mr. Barris's roster of celebrity clients grew along with his movie credits. He designed cars for Elvis Presley, Frank Sinatra, Zsa Zsa Gabor, Michael Jackson, and Sonny & Cher.

George Barris died on November 5, 2015 from complications of cancer. He will be missed for sure.

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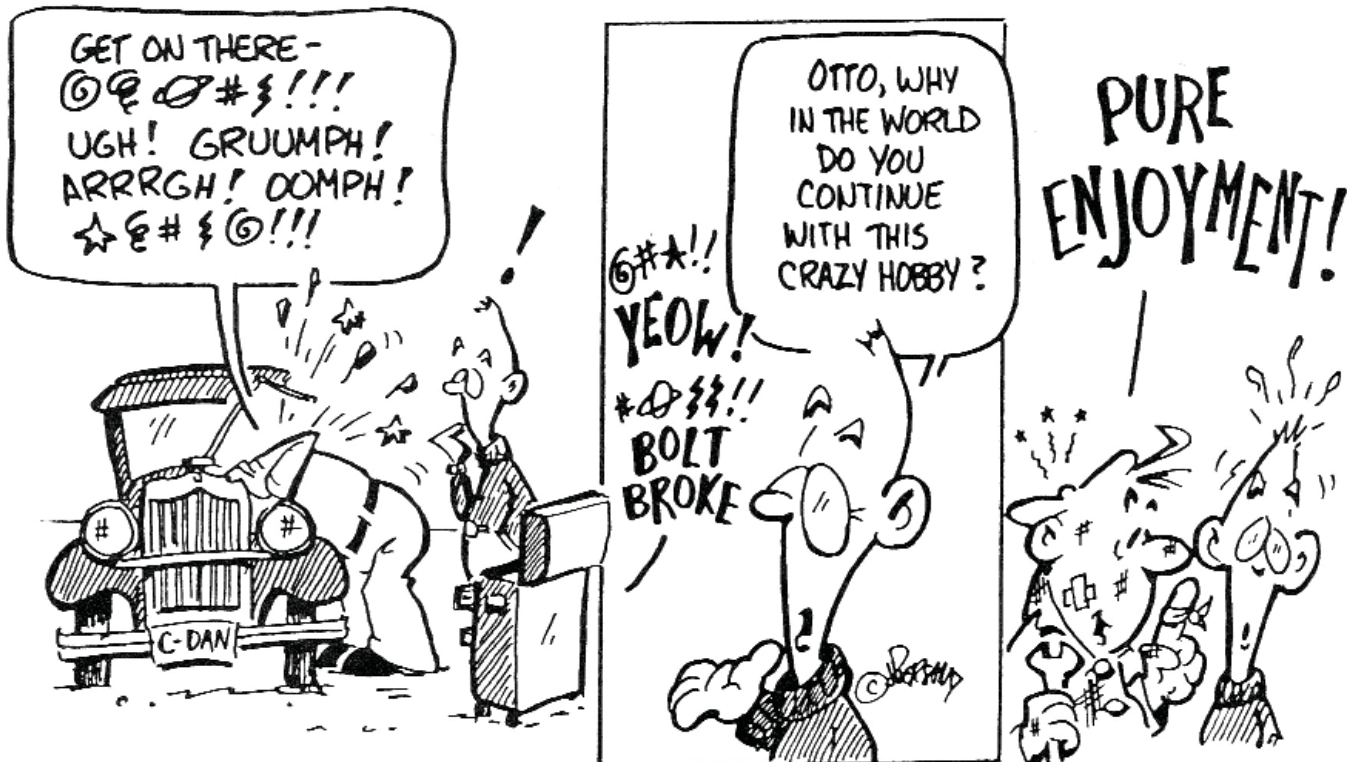
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## "Otto Mechanic"

By Jay Piersanti





## '57 Chevy Motorcycle...oh, yes...



Seems like everyone knows the look of a classic 1957 Chevrolet, whether its the chrome rockets on the front or the jutting tailfins in back. But when comes to finding those same distinctive features on a motorcycle, now that's a surprise.

Sure enough, a motorcycle builder who goes only by the name Lupo, from Toulouse, France, says the 11-foot-long motorcycle that he built to pay homage to the '57 Chevy took 3,000 hours to build.

The bike has touches from the famous Chevy throughout, including that massive tailfin -- made by splitting a replica pair and combining them. Lupo says the idea for the motorcycle came from a customer, who later dropped out of the project, and he took it on himself.

We found Lupo here last month at the SEMA aftermarket auto parts, one of scores of car fanciers who staked out their machines in the massive convention center parking lot.

The engine is from a Harley-Davidson but that he had to pretty much make everything else himself. How's it ride? "Really safe and comfortable," he says.

Check out the video on this bike from the Sema Show: <http://www.usatoday.com/story/driveon/2013/11/23/show-us-your-car-57-chevy-motorcycle/3682885/>



### **Must See Videos:**

#### **Amazing '55 Chevy**

You've never seen a '55 Chevy like this before. Well worth your time to check it out.

[https://www.youtube.com/embed/oJ\\_M-fdyKpw](https://www.youtube.com/embed/oJ_M-fdyKpw)

#### **Amazing Car Muesum**

This museum is located in West Okoboji, Iowa on Highway 86 in the Iowa Great Lakes Region. Okoboji Classic Cars, 810 Jeppeson Road, West Okoboji, Iowa 51351, Phone (712) 332-8029, [www.okobojicc.com](http://www.okobojicc.com). And I thought The Field of Dreams was the only thing to see in Iowa!

<http://www.okobojicc.com/the-occ-experience.php>

#### **Car Vending Machine**

Well... I don't know if this is a viable business model, but it's interesting for sure. Check it out.

[http://www.bizjournals.com/phoenix/blog/techflash/2015/11/this-phoenix-car-company-launches-worlds-first-car.html?ana=e\\_phx\\_rdup&s=newsletter&ed=2015-11-12&u=oiqD7%2FraJYSjibV90rLsDrj5jip&t=1448029796](http://www.bizjournals.com/phoenix/blog/techflash/2015/11/this-phoenix-car-company-launches-worlds-first-car.html?ana=e_phx_rdup&s=newsletter&ed=2015-11-12&u=oiqD7%2FraJYSjibV90rLsDrj5jip&t=1448029796)

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**789 Chevy. Never heard of it before?  
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1957, 1958 & 1959 — all rolled into one! This car was built by N2A motors (No Two Alike). Unbelievable! The company is planning a production run of about 100 vehicles. It sits on a Corvette C6 chassis.

The front is styled like a 57 Chevy...the side like a 58...and the rear like a 59. Hence the designation, "789."





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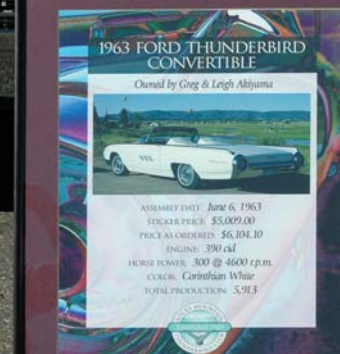
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I would love to continue publishing this newsletter for the enjoyment of all car owners of clubs belonging to the CCCC. I enjoy writing and producing this newsletter, and I hope you enjoy receiving and reading it as well. To continue operation, *Colorado Collector Car News* is actively pursuing advertising. If you have a business who would benefit from reaching collector car owners or you know someone who would, please contact me. Thanks!

Greg Akiyama / Publisher / 303-680-8298

#### ***One Time Rate:***

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Rates subject to change without notice

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This is a monthly publication dedicated to the enjoyment of the collector car hobby in Colorado.

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*ED: I am looking for other Cars of the Month. These cars do not have to be concours award winners, just cars that have owners who are proud to own them. (Don't we all feel that way?) To nominate a car and owner, please contact me at gakiyama@earthlink.net. Thanks.*

*ED: I am always looking for more subscribers. If you know someone who you think would enjoy getting my newsletter, please have them send me an e-mail complete with their name, club affiliation and phone number. I ask for a phone number because when (not if) an e-mail stops working, I can contact that person for an updated e-mail address rather than just stop sending them the newsletter. My e-mail address is: gakiyama@earthlink.net. Thanks.*

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