

HUDSONOTES

By George Schmidt

Still More Ways Than One

COMPLETE AUTHENTICITY in old-car restoration adds much to the genuine historical (and usually financial) value of a car, but this does not mean that the vehicle should preferably be made into an exact duplicate of others of its year, make and model. The cars were very rarely duplicates even when brand-new, and moreover the range of optional choices which Hudson offered in most years was especially wide for a carmaker of its size, allowing plenty of scope for individuality.

Paint colors are a good example of this. When repainting your Hudson-built vehicle, even if not retaining the original color, it is highly advisable to select and match one of the authentic colors (or combinations) offered by the factory in that model year. This will usually allow more than sufficient choice, while avoiding any anachronisms.

Paint hues on the 1948 Hudsons, the first stepdowns, tended to be somewhat darker than their 1949 equivalents (which mostly used the same code letters stamped on the door hinge). The original darker colors were handsome, and would doubtless appear to be again in fashion at present. At the same time, they seemed to subdue the very convex new body shape somewhat (as did the two-tone combinations). However, the factory possibly thought them too

conservative, since a change to some of the brighter 1949 hues was made well in advance (serial #482-41192 to #482-68732, depending on color).

Both the early and the late colors were mostly available in pairs, one lighter and one darker (with separate code letters or numbers), to provide effective two-tone combinations, though all of them could also be had as single tones if preferred. All of these were nitrocellulose lacquers (except for the wheel enamels, which were in colors to contrast with body paint for 1948-50, and for 1951 used a non-opalescent version of the body color). The Ditzler paint suppliers noted that Hudson generally requested a larger variety of colors than did most other carmakers.

ALL OF HUDSON'S 1948-49 paint combinations featured the lighter tone on the lower side sweep panels, and the darker one on the rest of the car. These were literally two *tones* (not two different colors), and they probably still offer the handsomest method of breaking up any possible overgrown-Volkswagen or inverted-bathtub effect on these models. Several light colors were also offered in 1949 as single tones only, and apparently one of these was selected for the deliberately insulting picture of a Hudson shown in a Volkswagen ad a few years ago. In

any case, the light all-over colors do seem to accentuate Hudson's stepdown body styling, while minimizing the effect of chrome trim.

On 1951-54 Hudson stepdowns, all two-color combinations featured one tone (or contrasting color) on the roof panel only, and the other color on the rest of the body. This early-1950's fashion, too, was well suited to the stepdown bodies, and was also available on most Brand X's at the time. It possibly helped to give an illusion of slightly reduced car height.

Hudson for 1950, however, offered more than one style of two-tone paint—the contrasting side sweep panels on early production until April 7, 1950; and thereafter the contrasting color on the roof panel exclusively. This information (supplied by the HET Club Library) came as a distinct relief to your columnist, who much prefers the earlier style of two-toning, and now can have his '50 C8 repainted in that way without fear of inauthenticity. It offers freedom of choice to other 1950 Hudson owners as well. Two trim colors which do not vary on these cars, however, are the "Velchrome" (silver aluminum) for rocker panels and skirts, and the low-luster black for radiator grille panels.

Hudson also offered attractive two-tone paint combinations during 1940-47, and no doubt earlier. A 1947 illustration shows the

Year's most beautiful cars
powered to out-perform them all!

Period ads often show two-tone paint schemes to good advantage.



NEW HUDSON HORNET FOUR-DOOR SEDAN IN HUDSON-AIRE HARDTOP STYLING

See Hudson-Aire Hardtop Styling—
try championship performance in the fabulous

HUDSON HORNET

and its new, lower-priced
 running mate, the spectacular

HUDSON WASP

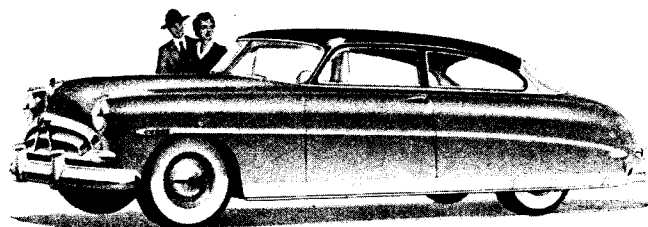
ONE glance tells you Hudson has the glamor . . . a short drive proves it has no equal for performance!

Inspired new Hudson-Aire *Hardtop* Styling—the newest look in motor cars, available for the first time at standard sedan and coupe prices—teams up with Hudson's famous high-compression power to give you a new driving thrill!

Take the wheel of the fabulous Hudson Hornet . . . sample the surging might of Miracle H-Power.

Or, try the new Hudson Wasp with its power-charged H-127 engine!

See your nearby Hudson dealer today!



HUDSON WASP TWO-DOOR BROUGHAM IN HUDSON-AIRE HARDTOP STYLING

Four great Hudson series for '52, including the brilliant new Commodore Eight and Six—the thrifty new Pacemaker, priced from near the lowest. Every Hudson has the extra room, comfort, and safety of "step-down" design.

Standard trim and other specifications and accessories subject to change without notice.

HYDRA-MATIC DRIVE
 available for all '52 Hudsons
 at extra cost.

Hudson-Aire Hardtop Styling at standard sedan and coupe prices

(pace Dave Sollon), I am grateful to the friend, Craig Nichols, who has spent much time and effort online in finding oversize pistons; also wristpin bushings, babbitted connecting rods, valve guides, and sundry other pieces for my 1950 Hudson 8. It would have been a far slower process via snail mail or the other usual channels. When this was written (February), the only major item still to be found was a set of piston rings, .040 inch oversize, and duly pin-milled for Hudson.

There's also more than one way to locate needed Hudson tech information. As a help when searching for a given item in past Hudsonotes columns, we hope that everyone found the second ten-year index (1988-98) which was published in the July/August 1999 issue of *WTN*, page 32, but unfortunately was omitted from the Table of

darker tone on the car's fenders and sides (up to the beltline), and the lighter one on the roof panel, trunk lid, and hood.

ESPECIALLY DURING the past year or so, I've been reminded that

there are certainly more ways than one of finding Hudson parts when needed: by mail or 'phone, at meets, via *WTN* and other ads...and also on the Internet. Even though I personally remain an unregenerate cybernetophobe

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I'VE FOUND MORE than one source of ideas for writing Hudsonotes. Among them are

suggestions from readers, magazines and books, the work on my own cars, and also attending old-car meets. At one event about two years ago, I spotted a gorgeous red '51 Hudson Commodore coupé. The car looked great inside and out, except that I noted that it had modern narrow-whitewall tires.

At that point it seems I was recognized. "Wide-whitewall tires would have cost twice as much as these," the owner grumbled. "Go on—write me up in your column!"

Add-on white rubber rings or "porta-walls" were a fairly inexpensive dress-up item for many years, and if properly fitted were not easily seen as add-ons except upon close inspection. In recent years, however, these have become much harder to find, and the very few that I've seen appeared to be almost as costly as the tires themselves.

A PROFOUND disagreement remains on the subject of mutilating Hudson and other 6-volt collector cars by installing a non-original 12-volt electrical system. Speaking from personal experience, I can say that over the years I've encountered fewer problems with 6-volt systems on Hudson and Nash than with the 12-volt systems on sundry Brand X's; and the cars were driven year-round under all conditions (except California freeways, of course). In any case, 6-volt systems are not likely to suffer on extended or high-speed trips, since there is plenty of generator RPM available for all electrical needs. Short-run and slowpoke city driving, on the other hand, especially at night, does call for extra reserve battery capacity and a higher charge rate (as my old 12-volt Buick has reminded me a few times).

M. E. "Red" Burke, California,



a member of the HET Club who reportedly has written for several prestigious auto publications, also offers the following comments:

"I too am a strong advocate of the theory that our earlier Hudson cars were designed to function well on a 6-volt system. I keep my cars all original but I am a fanatic about checking voltage along all circuits, from the battery to each component.... The voltage drop...will sometimes blow your mind and make you wonder why the unit even functioned at all! Cleaning, tightening, and replacing some old wires will, as a rule, bring the voltage up to acceptable levels. Dust off that voltmeter and go to work!"

Good advice—and we'd suggest checking switch contacts as well, including those in the starter solenoid. He continues:

"I've had a small ammeter tester for many years, and by just holding it on to a cable to the starter I can determine the ampere draw when someone spins the starter (with the coil wire pulled out). A draw of more than 200 amperes is not conducive to good starting, and indicated worn starter bushings as a rule, letting

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the armature touch the field poles. Or else [check for] bad contact of the brushes, [and the] commutator bars themselves."

He goes on to mention 6-volt starters overheated by extended 12-volt use, and also the one (on his son's Hornet) which broke the starter ring gear loose from the flywheel. "I am convinced that engineering at the factory is much bet-



ter than 'homemade' engineering," he concludes.

INCIDENTALLY, WE ARE not surprised to read of a Hudson that "rides like a \$60,000 automobile of today." The full-size Hudsons are certainly capable of this, and moreover are able to do it without the addition of radial-ply tires, or other modern "upgrading" efforts.

Undeniably—as someone has observed—this is not the Fifties. In fact, it's the "Aughts" (or whatever we may decide to call the '00's). It is an era of accelerating changes, not all of them desirable, so that it is now more than ever important to preserve the best of the past, in automobiles and otherwise—in authentic and uncobbled form—in order to help us retain our perspective and sense of direction. In the case of Hudsons, at least, this also demonstrates that the design and construction of these cars was well in advance of its time, and is still adequate for current conditions.

THERE HAVE BEEN several servicing suggestions for the Trico windshield-wiper drive cables on

Hudson stepdowns. The original recommendation was an occasional touch of grease on each cable where it passed over its pulley. But former Hudson engineer Harry Kraus has pointed out that the grease could often attract enough abrasive grit to cause premature cable wear and breakage, and so the later recommendation was to keep the cables clean and dry, but ungreased. This writer's suggestion is that if any lubricant at all is used, it should be a non-sticky silicone product. Apparently the slotted felt pads at the firewall were intended to help trap dirt and grit. On an old car they should be removed, washed (shaken with solvent in a jar), dried, and replaced. Ball-bearings on pulleys can also be washed with solvent, and then given a bit of heavy grease or oil.

TRADE MAGAZINES, though usually targeted at a single occupational group, are often interesting to other readers as well. Recently I saw a back issue of one published for auto-body shop people. It included an article about old-car restoration and painting, specifically for old cars intended mainly

for competitive judging and display. Tips were offered for the correct repainting of the frame and various underbody panels and shields (probably using an inexpensive finishing coat comparable to Hudson's "Chassis Black"). It was pointed out that some minor runs and dribbles in this underbody paint are entirely permissible—but only if they run in the same direction as they did originally from the factory, since many of these parts were simply dip-painted when new.

Have you checked the underbody panels on your Hudson lately? It would be embarrassing to show up at a club meet with any paint sags or dribbles underneath the car running in the wrong directions.

IN AN "UPSCALE" old-car magazine a few years ago, I read a sad complaint that collectible old Rolls-Royces have not been bringing the resale prices that they should, considering the quality and desirability of these cars, in comparison with the prices of other luxury makes. Reason? It seems that because these Rolls models are particularly well-built and durable, they have an unusually high survival rate, and so are not especially rare today, as compared with the number originally sold.

I'm sure that most of us Hudson owners can sympathize with that.

A HAPPY springtime, and a Happy Easter, to all!

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