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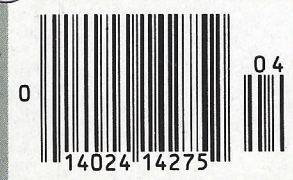
French running gear,
German horsepower,
Yankee ingenuity

C/D SURVEY

The ten most
beautiful cars
in the world

LONG TERM HONDA

30,000 miles
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TESTED:

Volkswagen Quantum • Eldorado Touring Coupe

The Ten Most Beautiful Cars in the World

Car connoisseurs and automotive aficionados choose their all-time favorites.

BY GARY WITZENBURG

• I am sure we all realize how much appearance has to do with sales; with all cars fairly good mechanically, it is a dominating proposition And in a product such as ours, where the individual appeal is so great, it means a tremendous influence on our future success.

—Alfred P. Sloan, Jr.
President, General Motors
July 8, 1926

Under an enormous portrait of Alfred Sloan, at the foot of a futuristic staircase in the GM Design Staff lobby at the Technical Center in Warren, Michigan, is a bronze plaque on which is cast the above designer's credo.

It worked for Sloan then. It works now. Presumably, it will work always. It's called "design," defined by *Webster's New World* as "the arrangement of parts, details, form, colors, etc., so as to produce a complete and artistic unit."

Whether a shopper is seeking an ashtray, a clock radio, a refrigerator—or a car—consciously or unconsciously he is influenced by design. Other factors (function, price, quality) being equal, a buyer will opt every time for the item that most appeals to him visually.

Design, like beauty, is totally subjective, but in every field there are some designs with nearly universal appeal, designs that make almost everyone's top-ten list. "Design," says GM's controversial, opinionated former design chief Bill Mitchell, "has always been and will always be a matter of taste and personal preference. But good design is ageless. It survives the years and continues to generate appeal. The automobiles that have such appeal have become recognized as classic designs."

Which would those be? I could list my favorites, you could list yours. But could we agree?

To find out, we surveyed top designers from all five domestic makers and

several major imports; we surveyed automotive critics, mostly *C/D* staff members or regular contributors; and we surveyed readers, computer-chosen at random from our subscription lists.

Each recipient of our survey was asked to list his choices for the ten most beautiful production cars ever built, "the best examples of clean, pure, and beautiful design. Which cars are the classics," we asked, "that will live in history as landmarks of automotive sculpture? Which turn you on personally, excite your aesthetic libido, and generate a desire to possess way down deep in your gut?"

The survey rules were simple, and they purposely left a lot to individual interpretation. Any number of cars could be listed in any order, and they could be domestic or foreign, antique or current. We insisted only that the candidates be "real cars produced in reasonable quantities in free-world countries—not one-off show cars, prototypes, race cars, or Czechoslovakian Checkers."

Not surprisingly, there was little agreement among the three groups of respondents. Each seemed to be looking for something different in automobile design. The designers' overwhelming favorite was the mid-Thirties Cord 810/812, followed by the early E-type Jaguar, the current Ferrari 308GTB/GTS, and the mid-Sixties Ferrari 365GTB4/GTS4 Daytona. The critics picked the E-type by one vote over the second-generation (1970 through '81) Camaro, and that in turn over the '53 Studebaker Starliner and the late-Forties Italian Cisitalia. The readers, who tended to prefer relatively recent machinery, elected Porsche's 911/930 as

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their favorite over Pontiac's 1970 through '81 Firebird, and that by one vote over Chevy's '63 through '67 Corvette, Mazda's RX-7, and Ford's (De Tomaso) Pantera.

When all the votes were tallied together, the overall favorite was the beautiful Jag E-type. Just one vote behind was the classic Cord, followed by a four-way tie for third among the Ferrari 308, the Camaro, the rear-engined Porsche, and the Firebird. The front-engined Ferrari Daytona stood alone in seventh place, the Jaguar XJ6/XJ12 sedan took eighth place, and the surprising '53 Studebaker Starliner came in ninth. In a three-way tie for tenth were the unlikely trio of '61 Lincoln Continental, Lamborghini Countach, and Cisitalia.

The designers cast a total of 110 votes for American cars, 50 for Italian machinery, 47 for German cars, 44 for British, 12 for French, and only 9 for Japanese. The designers' favorite marque (and the most popular overall) was Ferrari, with 31 votes; there were 26 for Jaguar, 16 for Cord, 15 for Chevrolet, 14 each for Porsche and BMW, 12 for Ford, 11 for Pontiac, and 10 for Lincoln. The thirteen critics awarded 45 votes to U.S. products versus 27 to the Italians, 24 to the British, 18 to the Germans, 12 to the French, and just 2 each to the Japanese and the Swedes. Chevrolet, Jaguar, and Ferrari tied as the critics' top marques with ten votes apiece. The readers awarded 41 votes to American cars (10 to Chevrolets), 26 to the Germans (14 to Porsches), 23 to the Italians (11 to Ferraris), 17 to the Japanese, 15 to the British, 6 to the Swedes, and 4 to the French.

In addition to voting for their favorites, the participants in our survey were asked to explain their choices. Their comments are as interesting and varied as the cars themselves.



Jaguar E-type

1. Jaguar E-type Series I (1961-67)

Our survey says this is the most beautiful production car ever built, and surveys don't lie. Some specified the coupe, others the roadster, but fully a third of the participants in our survey agreed that Jaguar's last sports car, in its earliest, unbumpered, six-cylinder, two-seat form, is one of the classic rolling artworks of all time. It was the favorite of our critics, and the second most beloved by our designers, though only one reader saw fit to mention it.

"Sensuous, liquid," says one General Motors designer. "The most voluptuous, sexy, curvilinear form ever put on wheels," raves another; "I could wash it all day." "Unique aero form," says a Chrysler man, noting that the "covered headlamps set styling trends

for the contemporary sports cars that followed. The look of smooth... zoom... and luxury." "Pure sex," sums up another. "Best-looking English vehicle ever made," states an AMC designer. "Still one of the ultimate head-turners," adds a Ford man.

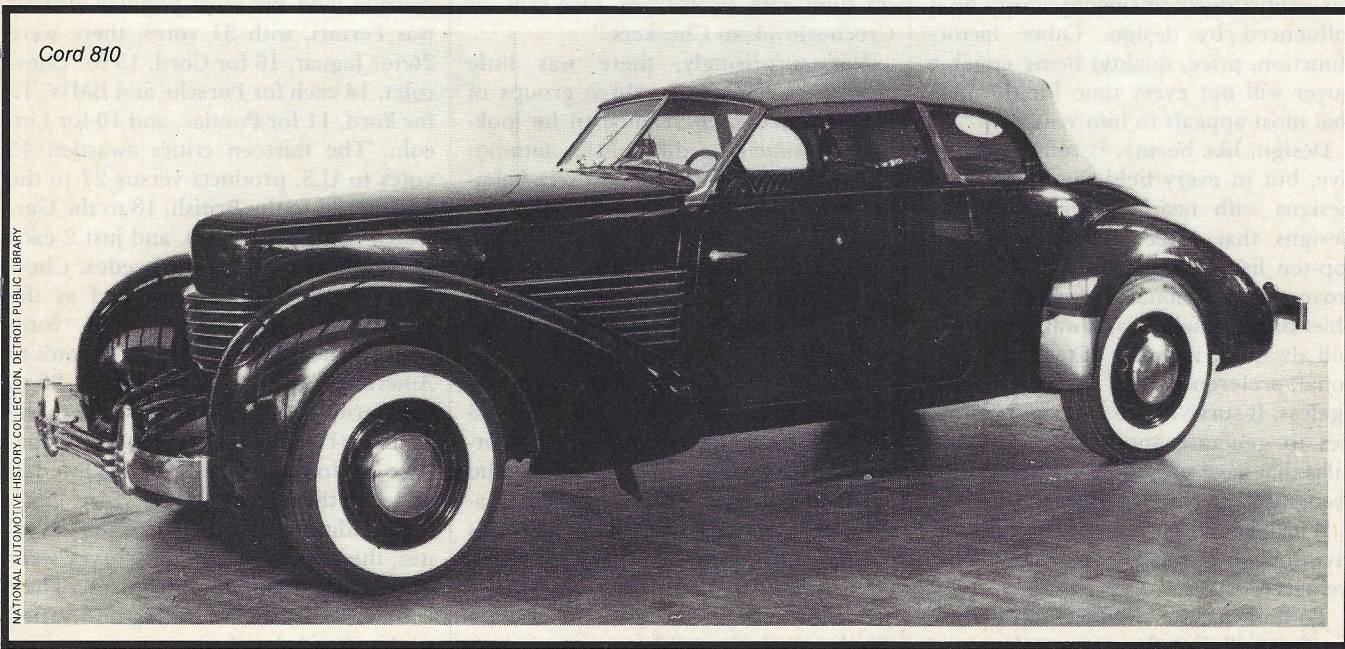
"Best of the intuitively streamlined cars, done back in the time when aerodynamics was all done by eye," says critic Patrick Bedard. "It's pretty, a sharp contrast to the aerodynamic cars done by science, which are truncated forms bristling spoilers." A reader emotes: "Stunningly erotic lines. Possibly the last great open sports car." "Crisp, light, and sleek," adds Rich Ceppos. Jean Lindamood says it best: "It makes the inside of my mouth wet when I see one."

2. Cord 810/812

So unusual was the "coffin-nosed" Cord 810 when it appeared late in 1935 that its designer, Gordon Buehrig, took out a patent for "a new, original, and ornamental design for an automobile." But so miserable were its front-mounted, remote-controlled transaxle and other mechanical maladies that fewer than 2500 of the 810s and the magnificent '37 supercharged 812s (the ones with the pipes) were sold before the company went belly up at the end of 1937. Besides being the first American production car with both front-wheel drive and independent front suspension, the Cord broke with the running-board tradition and pioneered hidden headlamps and such other innovations as concealed door hinges and fuel filler, a hood hinged at the rear, and twin streamlined tail lamps.

With 15 votes from our 25 designers, the Cord was the clear favorite of the experts. "When I was a kid, *this* particular vehicle was the car that motivated me toward wanting to become a designer," says an AMC man. "Clean and pure," states another. "Unique style set trends for many cars that followed," says a Chrysler creator. "Innovative and aesthetically refined," adds a colleague. A third Chrysler man relates seeing his first Cord at about age six: "From that moment on I wanted to design cars. Maybe someday I can do something that memorable." "Stands alone," says still another Chrysler designer, "for originality, good taste, and beautiful modeling." "Experienced in the gonads,"

Cord 810



TEN MOST BEAUTIFUL CARS

sums up critic Gordon Baxter.

In the Thirties, however, not everyone agreed, as independent designer Alex Tremulis relates: "When Gordon [Buehrig] left for greener pastures, I had the awesome challenge of trying to fill his shoes. Would you believe I had to fight off strong dealer demands that I hang chrome molding all over its exquisite sides in order to make it sell? When I did hit it with chrome, I hit it in the right place. All it needed in its supercharged form was the mesh side screens with the fires of hell emanating through its chromed side pipes, thus culminating in the ultimate coat of arms of motor-dom's aristocracy. To do this, I had to eliminate three of the louvers on each side, and for this act of minor surgery I know that Gordon has forgiven me."

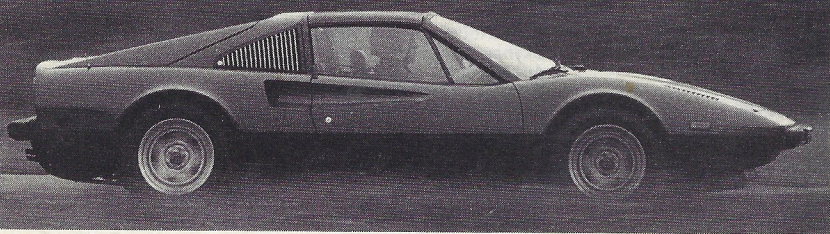
3 (tie). Ferrari 308GTB/GTS

Introduced at the Paris International Motor Show in October 1976, the stunning 308GTB (and its targa-roofed twin, the GTS) reached America the following year. For 1980, it was fuel-injected and became the 308GTBi and GTSi.

It has a tubular steel chassis for lightness and a mid-mounted 3.0-liter V-8 engine. Like most Ferraris, it was designed by Pininfarina, who calls it "the natural development of the 'two-seats, centrally engined sports car' theme." And it was one of only two Ferraris to garner a large number of designer votes. (Designers *love* Ferraris, but not always the same ones.)

"Contemporary, classic, faultless," says one import designer. "Pure, aerodynamic muscle," says a Ford man; "an airplane with the wings torn off." "To me," adds an AMC man, "it's better than the Boxer. Fantastic sculpture. A true future classic." "Pure form, sculpture, balance, proportion all come together," says a GM designer; "it's almost done too well." One critic praises the 308's shape as "rounded, sleek, and aggressive without being a doorstop," while a reader finds that "it possesses the best features of the Dino and the Boxer, offering a practical and reliable alternative to the person not wishing to sell his family for a Boxer."

Ferrari 308GTSi



AARON KILEY

The Ten Most Beautiful Cars— Overall Winners

- | | | |
|-----------|---|--|
| 1. | Jaguar E-type Series I | "Sensuous, liquid, crisp, light; stunningly erotic" |
| 2. | Cord 810/812 | "Clean, pure, innovative; aesthetically refined" |
| 3 (tie). | Ferrari 308GTB/GTS | "Contemporary classic, faultless; fantastic sculpture" |
| | 1970-81 Chevrolet Camaro/Z28 | "Simple, fluid, directional shapes; a breakthrough design" |
| | 1970-81 Pontiac Firebird/Trans Am | "Clean, flowing, aggressive; timeless proportions" |
| | Porsche 911/930 | "Pure, harmonious lines and forms; looks better every day" |
| 7. | Ferrari 365GTB4/GTS4 Daytona | "Powerful, exciting; simple, restrained beauty" |
| 8. | Jaguar XJ6/XJ12 | "Original, subtle, smooth; a four-door with sex appeal" |
| 9. | 1953 Studebaker Starliner | "Sleek, low, efficient; advanced for its time" |
| 10 (tie). | 1961 Lincoln Continental Four-Door | "Discreet, sophisticated; a breath of fresh air" |
| | Lamborghini Countach | "Brutal, violent, emotional; malevolence personified" |
| | Cisitalia | "Exquisite, beautiful; one of the world's treasures" |

Designers' Top Ten

1. Cord 810/812
2. Jaguar E-type
3. Ferrari 308GTB/GTS
4. Ferrari 365GTB4/GTS4 Daytona
5. 1970-81 Chevrolet Camaro/Z28
Porsche 911/930
7. 1970-81 Pontiac Firebird/Trans Am
1953 Studebaker Starliner
1961 Lincoln Continental
10. Jaguar XJ6/XJ12

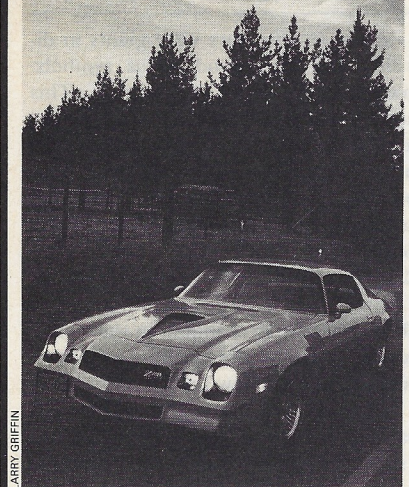
Readers' Top Ten

1. Porsche 911/930
2. 1970-81 Pontiac Firebird/Trans Am
3. 1963-67 Chevrolet Corvette
Mazda RX-7
De Tomaso Pantera
6. Studebaker Avanti
Shelby Cobra
Saab 900 Turbo
Mercedes-Benz 450SL
Porsche 928
Porsche 924/Turbo

Critics' Top Ten

1. Jaguar E-type
2. 1970-81 Chevrolet Camaro/Z28
3. 1953 Studebaker Starliner
Cisitalia
5. 1970-81 Pontiac Firebird/Trans Am
Jaguar XJ6/XJ12
Lamborghini Countach
Citroën SM
9. Porsche 928
Cord 810/812
Ferrari 365GTB4/GTS4 Daytona
Lamborghini Miura
Talbot Lago
Citroën CX
Austin-Healey 100
Volkswagen Scirocco
Duesenberg SJ
Auburn Speedster
1932 Ford Roadster
Maserati Ghibli

Chevrolet Camaro Z28



3 (tie). 1970-81 Chevrolet Camaro/Z28

When Henry Haga designed the first Camaro for 1967, it was admittedly a hurry-up job to catch Ford's fast-selling Mustang. It was nice enough, certainly competitive, but short of spectacular. When given the opportunity to do a follow-up Camaro, however, Haga's studio strived to take the lead, to design the industry's sexiest affordable four-passenger car. Most believe they succeeded. "The second-generation car is very much more a designer's car," says Haga. "It has the proportion, the dash-to-axle relationship, and the low cowl. Elimination of the quarter-window and the angle of the C-pillar give the upper a close-coupled look more reminiscent of a two-passenger vehicle than a two-plus-two."

"A breakthrough design with simple, fluid, directional shapes," says one GM man. "A beautiful design that anyone could afford," adds another. "Looks like it was designed by an Italian on a good day in 1962," says one independent designer. Critic David E. Davis, Jr., opines: "This has to be one of the best and most enduring automotive shapes to come out of Detroit since the beginning of World War II. It still makes heads turn. Will look honest in 2071." Like many Camaro fans, our critics tended to favor the earliest '70 and '71 Rally Sport with the mini-bumpers. "Still the best expression of the pony-car era," says our Baja Palos Verdes correspondent, Michael Jordan.

3 (tie). 1970-81 Pontiac Firebird/Trans Am

Tied with its Camaro cousin, the Firebird/Trans Am was slightly less

Pontiac Firebird Trans Am



popular with the designers and critics than the Camaro but got a stronger endorsement from our readers. At first spun off the '67 Camaro, a bone thrown to performance-oriented Pontiac dealers, the Firebird quickly developed a strong personality of its own under studio chief Bill Porter, and later John Schinella. The racer-look Trans Am came along in 1969 (two years after Chevy's Z28) and blossomed in both reputation and popularity. It was Schinella who gave it the well-known hood decal—often mocked but often imitated—and other innovations that helped it weather two fuel crises and recessions as America's premier performance car of the Seventies.

"Timeless proportions and surface development," says one Chrysler designer. "They still catch my eye after twelve years." Another praises the 1979 Trans Am in particular as "the best of another classic evolutionary series of cars, most specifically in its black-and-gold 'John Player' look." "Clean, flowing, and aggressive," says critic Csaba Csere, who prefers the '70 through '73 models. "A pure, voluptuous form,"

adds Ceppos of the '70 Trans Am; "the look of a mean, macho, American grand-touring car." A reader who voted for both Firebird and Camaro disdains the "louvered, spoiled models and the geegaw Trans Am with its screaming-chicken decal" for the "plain-Jane base models. These may not perform as well, but they look the best to me."

3 (tie). Porsche 911/930

Completing our four-way tie for third is Porsche's ageless 911 series, including the awesome 930 Turbo. The devotion of Porschephiles extends to design as well as performance, and it's more widespread than we would have imagined. The sixteen-year-old, air-cooled, rear-engined 911/930 was judged the most beautiful car in the world by our readers, and no fewer than seven of our designers agreed. Only one of our tough critics found it worth mentioning, however.

One reader calls the 911 "a timeless design that looks as good today as it did in 1966." Another, who voted for the 928 as well as the 911, raves: "Manna of the gods; those Germans own the road!" Still another reader finds the

Porsche 911



Speaking of Design . . .

An interview with Sergio Pininfarina.

• Of all the design and coachbuilding firms in Italy, large and small, none is better known than Pininfarina. Founded by Battista Farina (whose nickname was "Pinin") in 1930, this highly respected house of four-wheeled fashion is headed now by son Sergio, who is also president of the Turin Industrialists Union and a member of the European Parliament. We spoke with him on the occasion of last spring's Carrozzeria Italiana exhibit in Pasadena, California.

C/D: What makes a good design?

SP: This I think is impossible to define. It is certainly sure that a good design lasts for years and years, forever, because of the harmony of proportion, the balance of the masses, and the treatment of the lines. Normally a very nice car aesthetically is not a very strong success at the beginning; but people get accustomed, they like it more and more.

C/D: From the standpoint of design, which are the best Pininfarina cars?

SP: One of the most significant is the 1947 Cisitalia. It was the first to have the hood lower than the fenders. Also my father took the grille and put it horizontally, looking for a horizontal design; now every car looks low and wide.

Another is the Lancia Flaminia Florida, with the dihedral shape on the side, which had the effect of exposing to the light the upper part of the body at one angle while the lower parts were exposed at another. It makes the car look much longer and thinner, and it has been copied for years and years by many cars.

The first Ferrari Dino mid-engine, which was extremely low and had a tunneled-in, vertical rear window, a feature that is still on the Ferrari 308; the Fiat 130 Coupe, which was particularly elegant because of its proportions front, rear, and top; also the Lancia Montecarlo [Scorpion], with its windshield glued to the body, flush, without any weatherstrip, like an airplane, and the absence of any decoration. When you treat a car like that, the shape must be nice.

There are many others . . . Alfa Romeo Giulietta Spider, Fiat 2000 Spider, and many, many Ferraris . . . the 308 coupe, the Mondial, the four-door Pinin are most significant, together with the Daytona. The Daytona was the last thoroughbred of a race of horses with a very long nose because of the engine in front.

C/D: Competitors' cars?

SP: The Maserati Ghibli coupe, Lamborghini Miura, Lamborghini Marzal, 300SL gull-wing, Jaguar XJ6 and XJ12, the early Corvairs, the '63 Buick Riviera . . .

C/D: How do Italian automobiles compare to those of other countries?

SP: It is difficult to make definitions in general, but I feel that motorcars reflect the spirit of the people who design and build them. Italian cars, in my opinion, are the



most spirited, have the best performance, make the best noise. This is probably because when we are in a restaurant we eat the best food and we talk very loudly. And so the Italian cars are full of spirit, full of energy, have very good roadholding. Maybe I am not very balanced in my judgment, but you must forgive me: I am Italian.

• German cars give the impression of a very high degree of quality in construction. Every single piece looks well engineered, conceived, mounted, painted. Dependable and very refined.

French cars are more original in design, in expression. There are some solutions in French cars that could not be conceived anywhere else. For example, I'm sure that if I take 100 cars and put on a table 100 hood hinges, 99 will look the same, but the Citroën piece will look like a different animal. That is the way they conceive the car, a different way. Citroën is one extreme, but you find a little of this in every French car.

British cars suggest to me a very refined taste . . . a look for the eyes, smell for the nose, nice treatment of the chromium. Sometimes pieces made in large quantities look like they're made by hand. Also they are very faithful; they keep the same pieces from one car to another. Maybe this is not very up-to-date, but it is a very pleasant quality.

Japanese cars years ago were very much behind us, but they have made fantastic progress. Maybe they haven't invented anything special, but they are very accurate in marketing studies, looking at what people want. They are very good in every aspect, dangerous competitors.

American cars up to a few years ago could not be compared to European or Japanese cars because of the differences in the countries. The cost of petrol was noth-

ing . . . and so your cars were giants in dimension and very good status symbols. You were selling weight to people. . . This is not a criticism because, in value for the money, while your cars were maybe not the ultimate in refinement, they were very good. What you could get from a Cadillac or a Lincoln for a relatively low price was astonishing.

C/D: What will be the designer's role in the future?

SP: Everything is changing in the world, changing fast, and the qualities of a successful designer now must be different . . . When the motorcar industry was expanding, it was much easier; there was . . . more margin for fantasy and for mistakes. Now we must make no mistakes, and we have a smaller margin of action due to legislation, aerodynamic laws, the necessity of making things both easy to produce and not costly.

Under these circumstances, some people say that the role of a designer is diminishing in importance. On the contrary, I feel that the role of a designer is much more important now, in difficult conditions, than before. The designer must be different, and better, because he must be backed by sound technical knowledge: of construction, of materials, of technical laws.

In a way the competition can be compared to Formula 1 racing. Years ago, there were two seconds between one make of F1 car and another. Now there are five or six different makes in the same second.

C/D: And what will the car of the future look like?

SP: In architecture, in structure, I don't think there will be important change until the means of propulsion is radically changed . . . except for the necessity of getting less air resistance. We have already improved aerodynamics, but we have margin for much more improvement. Five years ago in Europe the average drag coefficient was 0.46. We are now below 0.40, around 0.38. I think in five years' time we will be around 0.32, and in ten years we will touch 0.30 or less. This will change remarkably the appearance of the cars.

Later, during a seminar at Pasadena's Art Center College of Design, Sergio Pininfarina was asked to name the most beautiful car, his favorite car, of all time. Others on the panel responding to the same question had named various Ferraris, Lamborghinis, Alfa Romeos. He thought for a moment, then replied:

"That is an impossible question. If I say one of mine, it is impolite . . . but I cannot resist the temptation. So I will say what my father taught me to say in such a case: my next one." —GW

TEN MOST BEAUTIFUL CARS

Ferrari 365GTB4 Daytona



Jaguar XJ6



Porsche simply "stunning and everlasting in performance and style."

A GM designer casts a vote for all forms of the 911: "So unbelievably clean and simple, the basic 911 body is so good that even the outrageous Turbo looks great." "Extremely harmonious lines and forms," adds a Ford man; "a pure design rather than a 'styled' vehicle." "Merges sophistication with raw performance," says a Chrysler designer, while a colleague calls the 930 Turbo "the ultimate evolution of the Speedster. Flowing form but with all the guts and go of a balls-out hot rod." Still another Chrysler respondent sees the '75 Turbo Carrera in his fantasies: "All 911s turn me on," he emotes, "but this one's my favorite. I have this dream of winning a dark metallic-brown job with black trim and tan interior in a raffle held to benefit inebriated automobile designers."

7. Ferrari 365GTB4/GTS4 Daytona

The much-touted replacement for Ferrari's 275GTB4 debuted in Europe in 1968, went into production in '69, and reached American soil the following year. Just three years later, when our bumper laws got really oppressive, it was lifted from the U.S. market. Some people find it one of the best Ferraris ever, in style as well as speed (it could touch 180 on a good day), while others believe it too round, fat, and gimmicky. Some voters prefer the GTS4 spyder version (produced only in small quantities to special order) to the berlinetta.

"Last of the large, front-engined Ferraris, its simple, restrained beauty stands out, though surrounded by more flamboyant mid-engined designs of the early Seventies," says a GM designer. "Sensuous; in the same league as the

KE," adds another. "Clean, powerful, exciting without all the scoops, spoilers, etc., that a lesser design would have to rely on to excite the senses," says a Chrysler man. A reader calls it "the sleekest front-engined GT car of all

time," and one independent designer writes: "The last of the great front-engined V-12 Ferraris was also one of the last designs worked on by Pininfarina [Sr.] himself. Its deceptive simplicity, purity of line, and aerodynamic refinement set it apart from other exotic GT cars, and I find it far better than *any* of the mid-engined exotics."

8. Jaguar XJ6/XJ12

One of only two four-doors on our winners list, the lovely Jaguar sedan was most popular with our critics. Introduced with the 4.2-liter six in 1968, it is graceful yet spacious, agile yet stately. The V-12 version bowed in '72, and both long-wheelbase and two-door variations followed. It got its first minor face lift for 1980 and is still going strong. Unfortunately, only the six-cylinder, automatic, long-wheelbase XJ6 remains available in the U.S.

"The best current four-door sedan marketed," says a Chrysler designer; "truly original, has fine proportion." Another calls it "a four-door with sex appeal. There is lust in my heart when I glance over its sensuous flanks, behold its wide-spread stance... I'd better stop now." "Terribly British," says one import designer, "and, like most things British, not too rational. Just nice, stuffy

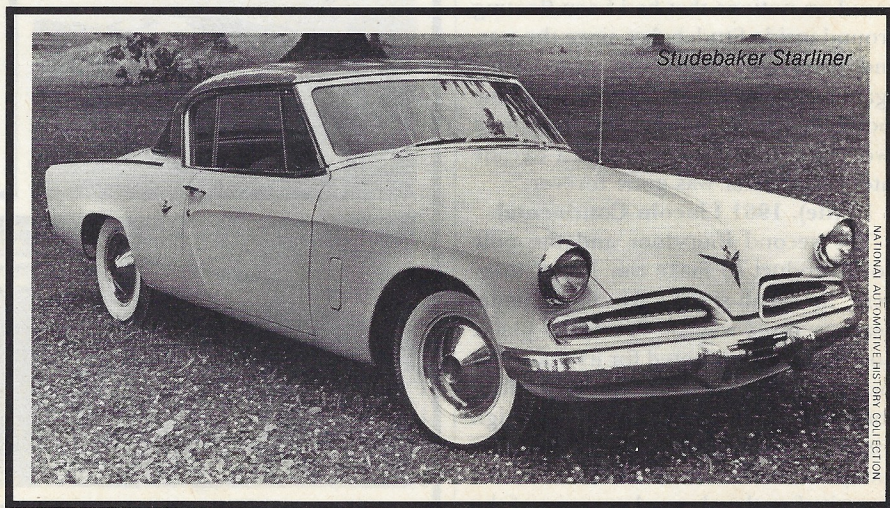
elegance." "Subtle beauty," writes a reader; "very smooth, appealing lines; nothing radical." "Sinuous, sensuous, purposeful, clean," concludes another. Critic Bedard sums it up: "Only the British could have done this: the classic definition of a sedan, a soft-look car that makes today's sculptured models look trite. How many other production cars hold up for fourteen years?"

9. 1953 Studebaker Starliner

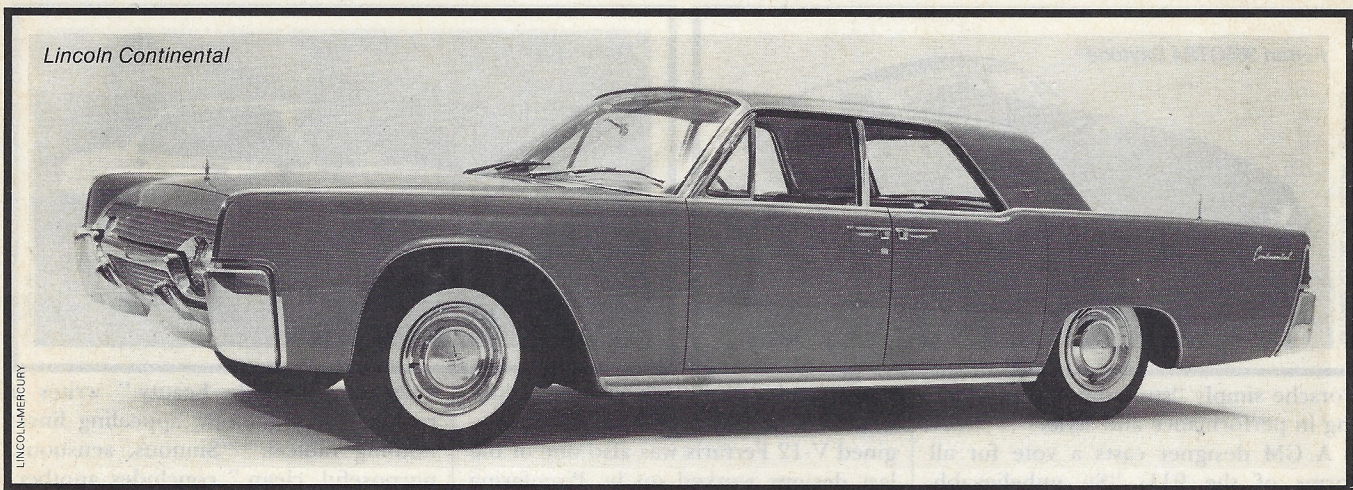
The biggest surprise of this exercise must be the best-looking Studebaker of all time, the 1953 Starliner. Our readers didn't remember it, but the designers and our perceptive critics ensured its place in our top ten. The Starliner's contours were adapted to four-doors and wagons and the controversial finned Hawks; but when the financially troubled company merged with Packard in 1954, the Studebaker's doom was imminent. Still, the sleek coupe, designed by Raymond Loewy and Robert Bourke, is generally recognized as a handsome, trend-setting shape that stands like a rose in a weed field among its early-Fifties contemporaries.

One independent designer remarks: "This must be the only American production car to be copied by, as opposed to copied from, Pininfarina. It was an el-

Studebaker Starliner



Lincoln Continental



egantly understated and beautifully proportioned car which only the arrant stupidity of the South Bend clodkickers could have turned into a failure. They preferred the tall sedans. Alas." To which a Chrysler stylist adds: "An advanced design for its period. Outstanding body-to-wheel-and-tire proportions. Frontal profile was a forerunner of aerodynamic shapes prevalent in today's design idiom." States critic Bedard: "A burst of classic good taste in a time when goldfish-bowl windshields and flipper hubcaps were the pinnacle of fashion. Deserves extra credit for running against the tide." "Taught Giorgetto Giugiaro everything he knows," postulates P.J. O'Rourke.

And Davis's three cents' worth: "Not always does a car company do everything wrong when the panic is on. The handwriting was on the wall for Studebaker when they turned to Raymond Loewy for a new line of cars, one that might turn things around for the stuffy and sadly mismanaged firm from South Bend. Loewy's chief designer, Bob Bourke, did this slippery, elegant coupe based on notions that had been floating around inside Studebaker since the war, and suddenly Studebaker was visible again. Unfortunately, it only took the 'both belt and suspenders' management two years to screw it up, and a decade later Studebaker was gone forever."

10 (tie). 1961 Lincoln Continental

The second four-door and the only Ford product to make our list of lovelies, the slab-sided '61 Continental heads a three-way tie for tenth place. Low and angular, noted for its opposite-facing doors and its unique four-door convertible iteration, it set a design trend in large luxury cars that survives today. "First breath of fresh air out of Detroit after the abysmal excesses of the

late Fifties. Discreet, sophisticated," says one Chrysler designer. A reader describes it as "a beautiful car, which was progressively junked up, until by 1970 it was almost unrecognizable."

10 (tie). Lamborghini Countach

Another surprise, a car whose aggressive shape elicits either love or hate but nothing in between, is the scooped and spoiled flying wedge called Countach. Introduced in Europe in 1973, it's billed by Lamborghini as the world's fastest production car, with a claimed top speed near 200 mph, but few have been imported here because of the difficulty and expense of meeting U.S. safety, bumper, and emissions laws.

"Absolutely the most excitingly beautiful car I have ever seen. Ultimate example of contemporary mid-engined design," says one Chrysler man. "After a while," adds another, "you get jaded a little. Just seeing one of these snaking through traffic knocks you over. Incredible! Brutal, violent, emotional, shocking!!! A true machine. Malevolence

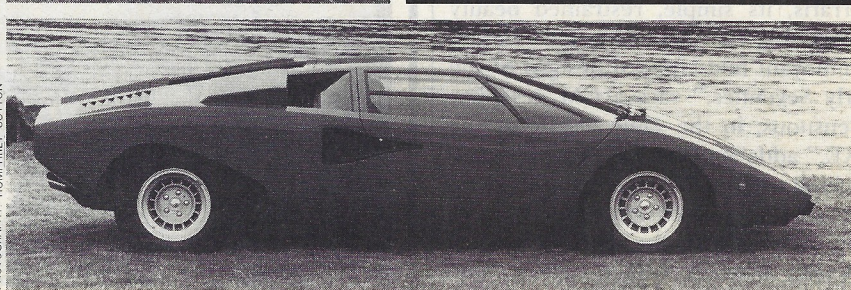
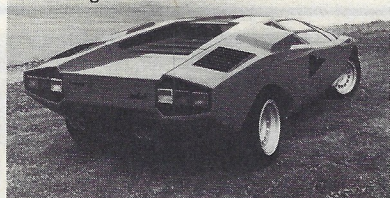
personified."

A reader describes the Countach as "the most outrageous, uncompromised design of all time." Critic Ceppos theorizes: "No car better represents man's desire to drive cars that look like spaceships—ultra-fast four-wheeled vehicles packed with NASA technology." Jordan recalls, "This is the car I spent all my study-hall hours in high school trying to draw" (he should have been studying). Sherman sums it up: "The most aggressive car ever made."

10 (tie). Cisitalia

The Cisitalia is considered by some the most important postwar design of all. With a tube-frame chassis, Fiat-based mechanicals, and a tiny 1.1-liter engine, it was fashioned by Pininfarina the elder in 1947 and built by a sporting-goods company called Cisitalia. It was a marvelous little race and road car that approached 110 mph at a time when the 3.4-liter XK120 Jag was considered awesome for touching 120, and its lissome, rounded, low-drag body was hailed as instant art. Unfortunately, only 200 or so were built, mostly coupes but some roadsters, before the company went upside down in mid-1949. Several of the few remaining examples occupy museums today, and one is the *only* car displayed in New York's Museum of Modern Art.

Lamborghini Countach



PHOTOGRAPHY HUMPHREY SUTTON

Cisitalia



An independent designer calls it "one of the world's treasures. At 105 mph with only 1100cc it is still an aerodynamic masterpiece. It made a tremendous impact on the entire styling profession and set the trend for all of us." Another adds: "Pininfarina's masterpiece richly deserves all the 'official' praise heaped upon it, and I wonder constantly why no maker of replicas has ripped it off lately." And critic Lindamood dubs it "an exquisite, beautiful, sexy car."

In addition to the top ten (twelve, really), seven cars received enough votes that they deserve honorable mention:

Mazda RX-7—"Toward perfection in a device that takes people from here to there through the wind, on four wheels." (Reader)

Porsche 928—"Best overall interior and exterior car style ever, with design continuity of flowing forms complementing each other." (Designer)

Porsche 924/Turbo—"A beautifully balanced design. A simple, elegant shape, with body-opening lines very flattering to the overall shape." (Designer)

Jaguar XK120—"Sensuous, feline shape befitting its name." (Designer)

1955-57 Ford Thunderbird—"Clean, sharp lines. A personal car with a personality." (Reader)

1963-67 Chevrolet Corvette—"Rocketship car. Stylists have been trying to make cars look like airplanes and spacecraft for a long time, and I think they succeeded best here." (Jordan)

Mercedes 300SL gull-wing—"Best race-car-on-the-street type. So powerful-looking." (Designer)

And, finally, some offbeat choices and comments, just for fun:

1955 Chrysler 300—"A total power statement; first postwar 'macho car.'" (Designer)

1967 Cadillac Eldorado—"A finely executed personal-luxury design expression." (Designer)

Renault 5 (Le Car)—"Not only lovable and huggable but truly profound—the future today." (Designer)

1955 Citroën DS19—"In its second, faired-lamp incarnation, the DS remains a superb presence on the road. No car has ever been quite so far ahead of its contemporaries when introduced, and certainly no other was still ahead twenty years later." (Designer)

Volkswagen Beetle—"There will always be room for this efficient little compartment, tourist-class. It reminds us of our roots, and half of what cars are for. (Only half, Ralph Nader, only half.)" (Reader)

Vector W2—"New look, modern technology." (Reader)

1957 Chevy—"Probably a child's dream. Could not afford one in 1957. Later, they were too old. Now they are too expensive again." (Reader)

Aston Martin V-8—"For a kick in the ass as well as a turn of the head." (Reader)

1932 Ford V-8 Roadster—"From its little cat-faced grille to its curved cowl, form followed function." (Baxter)

1913 Model T Ford—"Looks like the honest, suffering face of Abraham Lincoln." (Baxter again)

1967 Buick Riviera—"The most beautiful American car ever. The flowing, streamlined, futuristic Motorama look taken to its highest evolution. Others like the '63 Riviera, but it was too

upright; the '66 and '67 had it right." (Bedard)

1942 Buick Roadmaster convertible—"The kind of thing we fought World War II to keep. (We lost.)" (P.J. O'Rourke)

1950 Civilian Jeep—"Masculine but cute, the way we'd all like to be. Sort of the Al Pacino of motor vehicles." (O'Rourke)

1950 J2 Allard—"It gives me a hard-on." (O'Rourke)

1955 Chevrolet Nomad—"One of the few station wagons ever to stir up excitement. Built on one of the cleanest designs of the Fifties." (Ceppos)

Volkswagen Rabbit—"The completely thoughtful car. An automobile that emphasizes the distinction between good design and mere styling." (Jordan)

The American pickup truck—"The one real contribution America has made to automotive styling. It comes closer than most cars to wearing its insides on its outsides and achieving complete functionality while remaining aesthetically pleasing." (Jordan)

Cobra 427—"Reminds me of myself—a Rubens nude with a big motor." (Lindamood)

NSU Ro80—"Most handsome sedan ever made." (Sherman)

Citroën CX—"A rolling explanation of low drag coefficient. Tomorrow's shape today." (Davis)

1936 Talbot Lago Type 150SS—"A voluptuous, romantic design that evokes visions of French playboys throwing some clothes and the gold into the back and heading for the Pyrenees, a couple of jumps ahead of the Germans. Watching it race across France on the insides of my eyelids, I always knew it would drive like a mink." (Davis)

All of which neatly proves the old cliché "Beauty is in the eye of the beholder." As one critic reminds us, "There is good design and bad design, but an object doesn't have to have good design to be liked by *somebody*."

If we've proven anything with our little survey, it is that you can get a fair percentage of experts and amateurs alike to agree that certain automobile are more beautiful than others.

But which is really *the* most beautiful car? Bill Mitchell used to say: "Who is the most beautiful woman? If I could answer that question, I could answer the other." ●