

# ARIZONA DRIVER

THE ENTHUSIAST'S GUIDE TO LIFE BEHIND THE WHEEL

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## THE 20TH ANNUAL COPPERSTATE 1000

### EVENTS/TRAVEL

COPPERSTATE 1000  
MONTEREY PREVIEW  
TUCSON TURNS 235  
AUDI QUATTRO DE MAYO  
RALLIES AND DERBIES

### VEHICLES/DRIVES

MERCEDES-BENZ  
E-CLASS CABRIOLET  
INFINITI QX56  
MINI JCW  
CONVERTIBLE  
FORD FIESTA  
JEEP GRAND  
CHEROKEE  
SRT8  
SMART FORTWO  
ELECTRIC DRIVE  
VOLVO C70

### TECHNOLOGY

FORD VIRTUAL  
REALITY LABS  
GOODYEAR  
COMFORTRED  
TOURING

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# 20,000 MILES AND COUNTING

BY LARRY EDSALL • PHOTOS BY RANDALL BOHL AND LARRY EDSALL

**T**WO DECADES AND 20,000 MILES LATER, NO ONE STILL DOUBTS THE WISDOM OF LOUIS LAFLIN'S IDEA.

BUT WHEN LAFLIN SUGGESTED THAT THE MEN'S ARTS COUNCIL COULD DO A LOT MORE THAN WORK ON THE ANNUAL COWBOY ARTISTS SHOW AND PROVIDE VOLUNTEER BARTENDERS FOR FUNCTIONS AT THE PHOENIX ART MUSEUM, SOME WITHIN THE COUNCIL WERE SKEPTICAL, ESPECIALLY WHEN THEY LEARNED THAT LAFLIN'S IDEA WAS TO STAGE A 1000-MILE ROAD RALLY FOR VINTAGE SPORTS CARS AND THEIR OWNERS.



Terry and Noel Hefty head out of the Valley in their 1959 Aston Martin DB4 GT, followed by Andy Manganaro in his 1966 Ferrari 275 GTS and Dic Downs and Cathy Lewis in their 1969 427 Corvette. Photo by Randall Bohl.

The Field of Dreams preview at Tempe Diablo Stadium provided participants and the general public a chance to peek inside the cockpit of Sam and Emily Mann's 1937 Bugatti Type 57SC and under the hood of David and Marianne Duthu's 1952 Jaguar XK 120 M race car. Arizona DPS motorcycle officers provide safety and security for the enthusiasts and their treasures on the road. Photos: Bohl (2), Edsall (1), Bohl (1).



Laflin expressed his idea in 1990, in the midst of the demise of the US Grand Prix auto race that for three miserable years was held on the streets of downtown Phoenix. The world's top auto racing teams and drivers came to Phoenix in 1989, 1990 and 1991—and the event was such a failure that the Grand Prix circuit didn't come back to race again in any location in the United States until the turn of the century.

As if anything related to fast cars wasn't enough of a pariah, consider that if not enough people showed up to participate in the drive, the Men's Arts Council (MAC) could be stuck not only with a lot of wasted effort, but with a lot of bills—for hotel rooms and catering and such, and that was money the council's modest treasury couldn't really afford.

But Laflin and others within the men's auxiliary who were enthusiasts not only for art but for automobiles persisted, rallying together to buy what they called MACBonds, making \$100 deposits against any potential loss the council might incur.

To help stage the rally, Laflin called on friends from inside and outside the MAC, from an editor at a national automotive magazine to racer-turned-driving instructor Bob Bondurant, who offered to let participants in the road rally take some laps around his school's private racetrack. Through his connections back in the Midwest, he got former Chicago Bears all-pro running back and sometime professional sports car racer Walter Payton to come to Phoenix to serve as grand marshal for the inaugural event.

Arrangements were made for Payton to drive a Shelby Cobra on the rally, but the car's owner became angered when his name was absent from the event program, so he took his car and went home.

But fate smiled on Laflin and the rally, which staged from the Chrysler Proving Grounds northwest of Phoenix. It turned out that a local man had driven out in his own Shelby Cobra to see the cars participating in the rally. He was asked if he'd like to go along—his expenses paid—but, well, there was this one catch: he had to let Walter Payton drive his car.

From that somewhat frantic start, the Copperstate 1000 vintage sports car rally has grown into one of the most significant annual fund-raisers for the Phoenix Art Museum. Among such automotive events it has grown exponentially in stature as well, drawing significant cars and their owners from coast to coast and from around the globe.

Such was interest in the event's 20th anniversary running that organizers found a way to expand participation from the usual 65-70 vehicles and welcomed almost 100 cars and their driving tandems.

Those participants departed Sunday morning, April 11, from Tempe Diablo Stadium, spring training home to the Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim and—one Sunday each year—to the Field of Dreams car show that arrays the Copperstate cars around the baseball field and fills a stadium parking lot with dozens and dozens of other classic vehicles representing various Phoenix area car clubs and private owners. Accompanying the Copperstate entrants were an entourage consisting of a couple dozen support vehicles carrying everything from the participants' luggage—ever try to fit a suitcase into the "boot" of a British sports car?—to spare parts for the cars and mechanics who know the nuances of vehicles decades out of production.

KEEP RIGHT >>

The route for the opening day of the anniversary event mimicked that of the first day of Copperstate history, leading up the Yarnell Grade to lunch near Prescott, and then on up past the Granite Dells to Ash Fork and Williams, where the cars turned north to their first overnight stop—on the South Rim of the Grand Canyon.

Perhaps the most visually stunning car making that drive is Michael Hammer's 1963 Rolls-Royce Silver Cloud III drop-head coupe, which is the British automotive term for "convertible." The car is big, long and boldly bright in white paint and red interior—quite the contrast from the typically sedate, dark-colored Rolls one might expect.

The car is one of only 27 such 1963 Silver Cloud convertibles produced by Rolls-Royce, and was purchased new by Hammer's grandfather, Dr. Armand Hammer, a flamboyant, philanthropic and often controversial tycoon whose businesses included Occidental Petroleum.

Michael explains that his grandfather prepared well for his business meetings, and when he discovered that a French businessman was a car connoisseur, he wanted to make a proper impression as he drove up to the man's estate outside Paris. Hammer decided he could make such an impression in a Silver Cloud convertible, only to be told that Rolls-Royce was producing only 27 such cars that year and they all already had been promised.

But Hammer hadn't become a successful businessman without being persuasive. "Grandfather loved a challenge," Michael recalls, adding that his grandfather convinced the chairman of Rolls-Royce to sell him one of the cars. "Whoever the car was supposed to be for never got it and never was told why,"

Michael says.

Rolls-Royce delivered the car to Paris, where Armand Hammer and his chauffeur picked it up. They drove to the estate, made the proper impression and Hammer not only clinched the deal, but became lifelong friends with the French businessman.

After the business was transacted, Hammer and his chauffeur drove the car on a European tour to Genoa, Italy, where the car was put on a boat and shipped to New York, then sent by train to the

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Hammer home in Beverly Hills, California.

Michael remembers visiting his grandfather on Sundays, and that his parents eventually would find him in his grandfather's garage, sitting in the Rolls and pretending he was driving it across the countryside. He also remembers that on some Sundays, his grandfather's friend, actor Gregory Peck, would stop by in his 1961 Bentley Flying Spur.

"I wanted a car like that," Michael remembers.

And now, Michael Hammer not only has inherited his grandfather's Rolls,

but has discovered that an unrestored '61 Bentley Flying Spur offered for sale was, indeed, the one Gregory Peck used to own, and he's bought it and is restoring it to the way he remembers it was when Peck visited his grandfather. He plans to park the cars next to each other in his garage.

From the Grand Canyon, Hammer's Rolls and the other Copperstate cars headed east along the South Rim and then on to Cameron, where they turned north and eventually climbed through the narrow V-shaped Antelope Pass as they made their way to lunch on the shores of Lake Powell. After lunch, they turned south toward the Painted Desert and into strong, sandblasting winds that tried to strip the paint from their cars while providing a no-cost dermabrasion to those riding in topless roadsters.

Among those in such a car are Tom and Sharon Malloy.

Tom Malloy grew up around exotic and fast cars; his father, Emmett, owned Carrell Speedway in Gardena, California, and racecars driven by the likes of Troy Ruttman and Bill Vukovich. Tom liked his father's cars, but saw the cost his father paid, both financially and emotionally.

Tom put off his own interest in such things "until I got to a stage where I thought I could do it without hurting anyone or my business," he explains.

His business was successful enough that Tom Malloy could make up for lost time by buying vehicles such as a Ford GT40 Mark IV, a Lister-Jaguar Knobby, a 1953 Curtis 500S and some three dozen other classics. Still, he realized, something was missing; Malloy realized that all of his friends' car collections that he really envied had something in common—each included a "real" Shelby Cobra. He

decided that if he were going to be satisfied with his own fleet, he needed his own Cobra.

He not only found one, a real one, but one with some real interesting history.

Malloy's 1964 Shelby 289 Cobra carries the identification tag of CSX 2512. It was shipped from Shelby American to Hi-Performance Motors of Los Angeles in the summer of 1964. In the late 1960s, the Cobra's owner faced felony charges and fled in the Shelby. He made it across the California/Nevada state line before being apprehended. While he went to prison, the car went to police impound, where it was parked beneath a tarpaulin and pretty much forgotten for more than a decade.

Even then, when the car was found and scheduled for a police auction, it was listed not as an original Shelby 289 Cobra but simply as a 1964 Ford convertible.

A speed shop owner who had heard stories about an impounded Cobra went to the auction and reportedly was delighted to be the only bidder on the "Ford convertible." The car went through a couple of owners before West Coast collector and vintage racer Don Orosco got it and had it mechanically restored; he was delighted to discover that the aluminum body was perfect; nary a serious scratch from the road or impound yard.

Now the car, sans perhaps some sandblasted paint, is Malloy's, and thus made its way from Lake Powell down to Flagstaff and then the descent through Oak Creek Canyon to the red rock of Sedona, where the Copperstate contingent spent two nights.

Tuesday morning, the cars did a drive from "red rocks to the green zone," from Sedona down through Page Springs, then south on I-17 and west through Prescott

Valley and on to lunch at Bagdad. After lunch, the route returned, but this time through Skull Valley and then up 89A over the evergreen Mingus Mountain into Jerome, then across the Verde Valley and back to Sedona.

Each year on the Copperstate 1000, funds not only are raised for the Phoenix Art Museum but also to benefit families of fallen state police personnel. Eight "motors" accompany the rally, and from time to time, and when the lack of traffic allows, the officers don't seem to mind when the sports cars are driven as they were intended to be driven.

Each year, the "motors" even present an award to one of the Copperstate participants, "for reasons the rest of us don't want to know," it says in the route book. That award is one of several given each year at the end of the rally. Among the others are the Louis E. Laffin III Spirit Award, the Directors Award—given by the Phoenix Art Museum to the automobile making a unique stylistic and artistic statement—an award to those who traveled farthest from home to participate, a Condolence Award—given to the car that needed the most attention from the mechanics—and the Participants' Choice Award, in which those on the rally pick the car they'd most like to add to their own collections.

This year, the Participants' Choice was Bill and Linda Pope's 1952 Fiat 8V Zagato Elaborata, one of only five such cars with double-bubble Zagato bodywork.

The car was gorgeous and immaculate and would be welcome in any collection. But beauty, as they say, is in the eye of the beholder, and to my eyes, the lust car of Copperstate 2010 was Terry O'Reilly's 1954 Bentley Special, the so-called Gooda Bentley.

Bentleys, of course, are luxury cars, but while this one retains its fine wood dashboard, it was specially built not for the road but for the racetrack. Robert "Bob" Gooda considered the standard Bentley R-type coupe body to be, well, as O'Reilly puts it, "profoundly ugly," so he commissioned coachbuilder Robert Peel to create an aerodynamic body that tapered back into a cropped "kamm" tail.

Though a two-door, the Bentley R-type is a large car: its 120-inch wheelbase is nearly half a foot longer than the modern Cadillac Escalade sport utility vehicle, but with its racy bodywork, the Bentley looks sleek and fast to the point of being well proportioned.

Gooda raced the car with its 5.0-liter Bentley straight six engine at Silverstone, Goodwood and other British racing tracks and on the European continent. O'Reilly first saw the car at The Quail, A Motorsports Gathering on the Monterey Peninsula. The Bentley was parked next to O'Reilly's vintage Lincoln racer, a car he believes to be the last surviving American vehicle that competed in the original Carrera Panamericana, the great Mexican road race in the early 1950s.

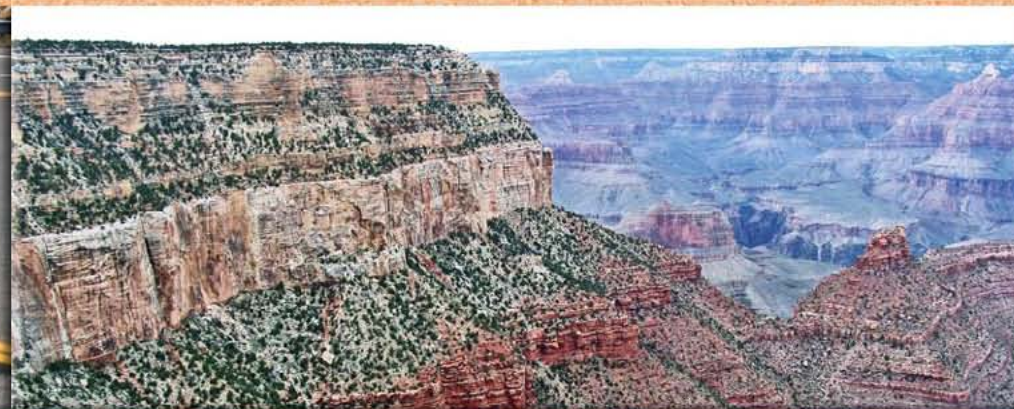
O'Reilly wanted the Bentley and finally negotiated the price down to what he considered to be reasonable, just four months before the Copperstate rally.

Like the Bentley, O'Reilly was born in the UK. He holds an Irish passport. His family immigrated to the United States in 1960. He works as a trail lawyer, specializing in aviation issues, though he says he's "deep into this Toyota thing" on behalf of plaintiffs he represents.

He said he's drawn to what he calls "weird" cars and owns a dozen or so.

KEEP RIGHT >>

Michael Hammer's 1963 Rolls-Royce Silver Cloud III Drophead Coupe overtakes the author in the high country. Bill and Linda Pope's 1952 Fiat 8V Zagato Elaborata took the Participants' Choice Award this year. At the first overnight stop, the South Rim of the Grand Canyon competes with all this fine machinery for beauty and sheer grandeur. Terry O'Reilly's 1954 Bentley Special was built race-track-ready, rebodied as a two-seater fastback. Photos: Edsall, Bohl, Edsall, Bohl.





some typical collectibles and some, like the Bentley, rather special.

The 20th anniversary Copperstate 1000 ended on Wednesday, when the cars made their way back to Phoenix, crossing the Verde Valley and then climbing to the Mogollon Rim and driving through Payson on the way to lunch at Saguaro Lake, and from there down the Beeline to dinner at the Camelback Inn.

Among the 90-some cars participating in the rally are more than a dozen each Jaguars and Ferraris, half a dozen Mercedes—including a pair of Gullwings—assorted Chevrolet Corvettes and Shelys—both Cobras and Mustangs—a passel of Porsches, several Aston Martins and Alfa Romeos, a couple each of Austin-Healeys, Packards and Pontiacs, a Hudson Hornet, a Siata, and even a Toyota.

A Toyota? Toyota made a car that's now considered a classic?

Indeed. In 1967, Toyota produced the 2000GT, the first Japanese supercar. Of 337 cars, fewer than 65 were shipped to the United States and only 36-38 of them are known to survive. A Toyota dealer in Florida collects them; he and his father and brother have 15. Half a dozen are in museums. Toyota's American headquarters has three. Another half dozen are in various states of restoration at Maine Line Exotics, which is where Brown and Sara Maloney found theirs. They are only the car's third owners.

Brown Maloney says he's been fascinated by cars ever since his parents bought a 1956 Ford Thunderbird—a car he still owns, along with some 20 others, including the Toyota.

The 2000GT not only has a long, low, muscularly exotic and aerodynamic body with pop-up headlamps and a wrap-around windshield, but a 2.0-liter, inline

six-cylinder engine built for Toyota by Yamaha and tuned to spin to more than 6000 rpm and propel the car to a succession of international speed records, including one 72-hour stint in the mid-'60s during which the Toyota supercar averaged nearly 130 miles per hour.

In the decades since Louis Laflin first suggested an automobile rally, the Copperstate 1000 has done much more than raise money for the Phoenix Art Museum. It has led the Phoenix art community to see the automobile as a form of artistic expression.

"Having the Copperstate led us to have the Curves of Steel," said Phoenix Art Museum director James Ballinger said, referring to the 2007 exhibit of classic and especially streamlined automotive design from the 1930s (see *Arizona Driver*, May/June 2007, online). Ballinger called Curves of Steel a "groundbreaking exhibit" that brought people to the art museum who never before had entered the building. Several of the cars on exhibit, he noted, came from the collections of Copperstate participants.

The museum is working to offer an exhibit of automotive art from the first half of the 20th century, and there's talk of staging another Curves of Steel-type exhibit of vehicles, this time perhaps featuring something as elegantly exotic as Bugattis or as modernly artistic as hot rods. ■

After working as a sports editor for daily newspapers in Michigan, **LARRY EDSALL** was on staff for 12 years at *AutoWeek*, most of it as managing editor. He has driven more than half a million miles testing cars on four continents. He helped launch [www.izoom.com](http://www.izoom.com) and also helped found PAPA, the Phoenix Automotive Press Association. His books include *Masters of Car Design (Genius)*, *Miata 20 Years* and his eleventh, *Camaro: A Legend Reborn*, all available at [amazon.com](http://amazon.com).

Copperstate 1000 rally cars head up Antelope Pass, a steep climb leading to Page and Lake Powell. Photo by Larry Edsall.

Tom and Sharon Malloy's 1964 Shelby 289 Cobra, identification tag CSX 2512, is well suited for the open road, with a history as an actual getaway car. Brown and Sara Maloney are the third owners of this red 1967 Toyota 2000 GT. After lunch on Monday, the cars find a massive, Interstate-closing dust storm awaiting them around the turn. Budd and Laurie Florikiewicz pilot their 1959 Jaguar XK 150S roadster. Photos: Edsall (3), Bohl (1).

