

Manual Labor

The Haynes International Motor Museum boasts an array of fine cars

BY MICHAEL MILNE • PHOTOGRAPHY BY LARISSA MILNE



When John Haynes was 16 years old, he purchased two Austin 7s and proceeded to salvage them to create his own sports car. What car-loving teenager hasn't tinkered around in the garage? Haynes was a little different though, taking his early interest to the next level. He founded the Haynes Publishing Group, creating the detailed car manuals—with their iconic yellow and red stripe—that are famous worldwide.

Not content to “just” publish books about cars, Haynes wanted to collect cars, too. From a modest starting point of 29 cars, Haynes has gone on to amass a stellar collection of more than 400 vehicles that form the heart of the Haynes

International Motor Museum in Sparkford, England. Founded in 1985 on the remains of an American World War II-era ammunition dump, it's located about 120 miles west of London and is easily reachable by car or mass transit. Haynes calls it, “a sanctuary for ‘petrol-heads’ to immerse themselves in automotive history.” That history starts pretty early; the oldest vehicle is an original-condition 1897 Daimler Wagonette.

From that humble beginning, the collection rambles from the dawn of motoring history through exotic supercars of today. On a recent tour, museum co-founder and former curator Mike Penn emphasized that the Haynes is “a living museum

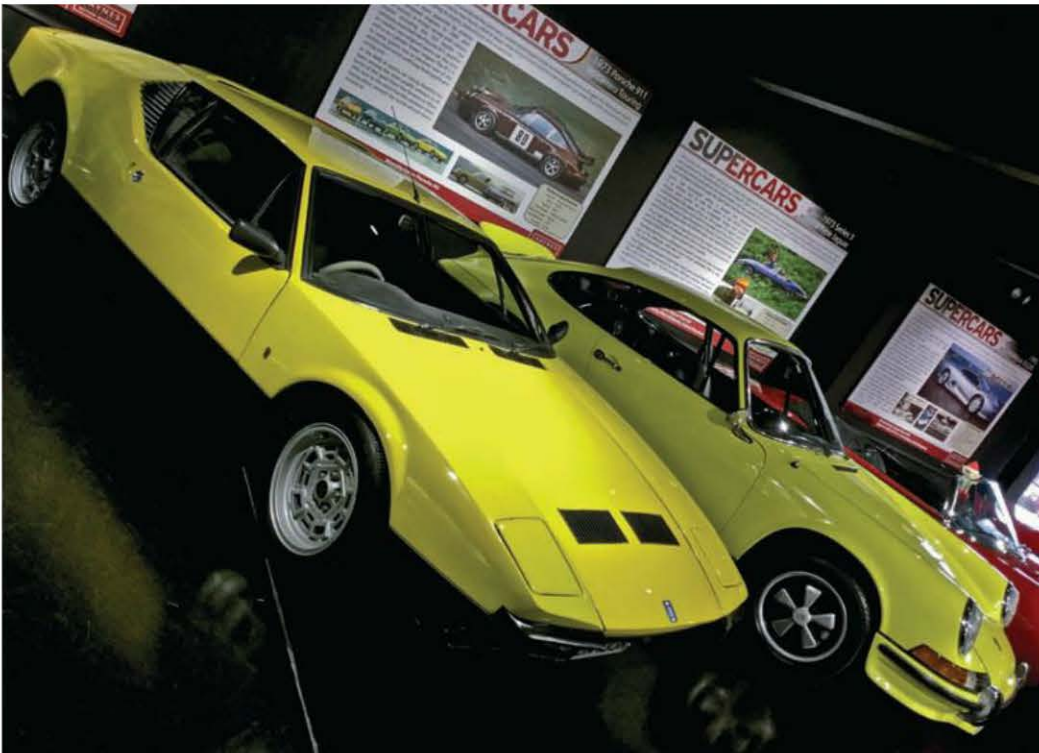
where the cars still run and visitors can hear, touch, and smell them.” In fact, they even built an adjacent test track to take them out for a spin.

Given John Haynes's early background getting his hands dirty working on cars, rather than just admiring them, Penn states, “There is an emphasis on the engines that power these machines.” The first exhibit highlights the birth of the piston engine with a quote from the famous 13th century philosopher Roger Bacon, who lived just six miles from the museum's site: “One day chariots will be constructed which will start and move without the impulsion of man or horse, or any other animal.”

Other exhibits include videos and models of working engines to explain how they work.

The museum is broken out into several large halls. Given the location, there is an emphasis on British marques, including Jaguar, Lotus, Morgan, Aston Martin, Rover, and Jensen, dating back to the “glory days” of British automotive engineering.

One of the most popular cars greets visitors in the front lobby, a flaming red 1965 AC Cobra 289. It was one of Haynes's earliest purchases and has never been restored. About a decade ago, the museum held a major show featuring 30 Cobras from across Europe. Carroll Shelby himself attended and drove this Cobra (at a gentle pace) on the test



including an Austin-built 1960 Nash Metropolitan, which tried (and failed) to be a hit in the U.S. market; a 1967 Humber Hawk and the low-budget 1959 Ford Popular. Due to a design flaw, the windshield wipers would stop working when the car accelerated, a quirk that made it not very popular after all.

A feast for the eyes is the Red Room, where dozens of red vehicles are lined up cheek to jowl. The curvaceous 1956 AC Ace Bristol looks familiar to any Cobra fan while the 1959 Austin-Healey "Frogeye" (or "Bugeye" to Americans) Sprite became an affordable, and popular, sports car in its own right.

Other galleries include Minis and Micros, Motorcycle Mezzanine, Custom and Bespoke, the Morris Story (dedicated to the "M" in MG), Supercar Century, and more. For further information visit: www.HaynesMotorMuseum.com. 🇬🇧

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track, much to the delight of the gathered assemblage.

Because the museum has "International" in its name, it also features many non-British brands. Some of the highlights include a 1972 Datsun 240Z, a 1992 Hindustan Ambassador built in India, and a beast of a Soviet 1959 Gaz M13 Chaika that was modeled (copied?) after a 1955 Packard Patrician.

Speaking of Detroit metal,

the museum claims to have the largest collection of U.S.-built cars in the United Kingdom. A fine selection called "The American Dream" includes a 1928 Jordan Playboy, a rare 1920 Moon Model 642 Touring Car, and a 1937 Ford Model 78 woodie wagon, among others. Pride of place goes to a 1931 Duesenberg Model J Derham Tourster.

One of the most humble

galleries, and also one of the most popular, is called Memory Lane. It features British daily drivers from the postwar years, causing many grandfathers to grow teary-eyed at the sight of a car from their early driving days, while exclaiming fondly, "Oh, I had one of these." In a museum stacked with, well, "museum pieces," it's refreshing to see so many accessible cars that visitors can remember riding in,