



KOTR PINS

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## KING OF THE ROAD ANTIQUE CAR CLUB

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Visit our website; [KOTRACC.org](http://KOTRACC.org) to see more of what we are all about



# *Happy Birthday KOTR*

It's been nine wonderful years since KOTR hit the road. We began our time together as a chapter of the Ocala Region of the Antique Automobile Club of America. Together, along with other regions, we co-hosted two national shows in Ocala and as head club we hosted a national tour right here in our own back yard in 2021.

We were founded on the principle that it was way better to have our cars out on the road, using them as they were meant to be. Mystery tours to dinner, ice cream runs, visits to car collections with just a few shows thrown in to show everyone else what we are all about.

This past January 1st, we became an independent car club, cutting ties with the national organization as a

club. As we have aged both as a club and as individuals our scope of activities has been altered somewhat. The big shows and tours took tremendous effort on many of our members to not only organize but to produce a final result. Today, it's smaller tours that we can accomplish on our own, on a monthly basis.

We no longer have to be the "Big Dog" on the street. We can enjoy our beautiful cars with our wonderful friends, going out for picnics and "Pies In The Park." Honoring our good friends who have left us all too soon.

Old cars are a reason to get together, good friends are the "glue" that keeps us together, enjoying the tales of yore while driving and dining the byways. KOTR was built for just this purpose. Let's keep it going for another nine years at least. Happy Birthday, Y'all!

# THE ART OF THE CAR

In earlier issues of KOTR PINS I introduced you to two very talented automotive artists, Tom Hale and William Phillips. In this issue I would like to show you some of my own work with cars. While not in the class of the AFAS, Automotive Fine Art Society, I feel that you might enjoy a peek of what I have been doing for years.

Our cover this month envisions the grill work of a 1948 Lincoln Continental. Cars of the thirties, forties and fifties hold a special spot in my work, often referred to as



I once went on a weekend road trip with the Classic Car Club of America in the fall. I was mesmerized by the reflections on the hood as we drove along the country roads that autumn day. This is the hood of a 1953 Rolls Royce I owned at the time, taken in my driveway the next day. It captures all the glory of that day we drove to Drake's Well in Titusville, Pennsylvania so long ago.

“fat fenders.” These cars had substance and stature, they put their “arms” around you and nestled you into their comfy brocade or leather seats.



This one I call “Cherry Bomb,” a 1941 Cadillac convertible coupe. The owners were traveling with a CCCA Caravan that overnighted in The Villages some years ago. The lines of the car I found, most impressive. Hard to compare these “highway denizens” to what we see crowding the roads these days. It ain't no Tesla, that's for sure.

Just imagine if you will, sitting behind the wheel of either one of these beauties. Cruising down the road, the murmur of the engine in your ears, those soft leather seats, the radio playing a little Glenn Miller tune. That was going in style my friends. A time soon to be forgotten in this new age of “rolling potato” cars. What a shame!





# Nueve de Mayo

**This years Mexican heritage fiesta took 16 KOTR members to Eustis' La Perla Tapatia Mexican restaurant. This quirky little eatery had good food and good service as well. The portions were more than ample as most everyone took home left-overs to enjoy for yet another meal. The plan to dine in Eustis was prompted by the new members we have**

**that are from that general area. Alas, many of them were committed elsewhere and our count was less than usual.**

**We did have a good time none the less and we made our way back west minus the rush hour traffic we experienced on the trip to Eustis.**



Above Janice Palmer Forster joined us for the festivities as did Bill and Diana Bray along with Frank and Dee O'Donnell - top center.

Lower center was half of the gang and on the far right upper are Urs and Stefanie Nyffeler. Finally on the lower right is Rich Courmettes and Ellen Harcourt enjoying their meal.





# May 18th Spanish Springs Cruise In Feature Club **KOTR**



← MS Joan fits right in with Jimmy Cipollone's 1956 Chevy Bel Aire.

→ Just one of the many admirers of Frank and Dee O'Donnell's many cars on display.



← Our newest KOTR member, Rich Udell and his friend Nancy Sutters. As always, Rich's companion, "Hoochie Mama" sits in his lap.



# More Spanish Springs



This year, KOTR decided to honor our good friend and former member Al Forster with the best "BIG CAR" at the May Spanish Spring Cruise-in when we were the feature club. This years winner was Bob Grasso with his 1977 Cadillac Coupe Deville. Al loved and drove the big cars. Here's to Al!



Here's our line-up of 16 cars down Main Street, Spanish Springs.



Above is the 426 MAX WEDGE engine of Rich Udell's 1963 Plymouth that he displayed at the May Cruise-in. You know when Rich is coming in his Plymouth, you can hear it blocks away. This is a superstock with dual quads. These were the predecessors to the hemis that became so popular in Chrysler automobiles.

To learn more about the MAX WEDGES just click on the picture above.



Gordon Platt's beautiful 1970 Oldsmobile 442 coupe displays KOTR's new window flag. You can get them for your car(s) as well. Just let us know. Let everyone know who we are when we are showing or on the road.





# Summerfield Suites Show June 14th



For many years, we have been putting on a little show for the residents of Summerfield Suites assisted living. This year however, under new management they were not well versed in hosting this event, they knew cars were coming but that was all. Only two or three residents were brought out to view the cars in the two hours we were there. No staff in poodle skirts as in previous years, no posing for pictures, no residents choice award either.

We did have a good time talking cars among ourselves and we did manage a good lunch at the nearby Chili's.

# 1990 Eunos Cosmo: Japanese Domestic Market Jewel

Frank O'Donnell



Oil. It was all about the price of oil.

At the end of World War II, Japan was a devastated country. There was little food available, and the economy was in shambles. There was virtually no manufacturing, no heavy industry, and no automobiles.

The Allied occupation (1945-1953) headed by General Douglas MacArthur, sought to rebuild the country, and installed the country's first parliamentary democracy, governed by an American-written constitution. The conquered Japanese were in awe of the most powerful nation on earth and their effort to imitate our industrial success, our prosperity and even our customs began almost immediately.

The availability of cheap, crude oil had always been the driving factor behind America's auto industry. Beginning in the 1950s, owning a new car became the status symbol for many families in the United States. Detroit built large cars because that's where their profits were. Big, heavy cars you could hang expensive options on; V-8 engines, air conditioning, power steering, power windows and automatic transmissions. Large cars that averaged 10-12

gallons per mile weren't a problem, because a gallon of gas cost a quarter.

Build quality wasn't an issue either for a nation whose consumers sometimes traded in their old cars for a new one every other year. Plymouth premiered its new line-up of cars for 1959 with the slogan, "Today's best buy - tomorrow's best trade in!" Rustproofing? Why would manufacturers spend an extra \$2.00 per car on that?? Planned obsolescence was built in. There wasn't really any outside competition to challenge the U.S. automakers and brand loyalty was the norm.

American auto manufacturers were willing to concede the small car market to "the imports" because building big cars meant big profits; small cars meant small profits. That's the reason you never saw "stripped down" cars on the lot selling for base price. "Stripped down" was a Detroit moniker created to shame a customer into buying cars with options; much like odometers that only went up to 99,999 miles (to imply your car had reached its end).

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Across the Pacific, Japan had virtually no natural oil resources, so it designed and built its first automobiles in the 50's for its own home market to be fuel efficient. Because steel was expensive and weight directly affects fuel economy, they were also built to be lightweight. Additionally, as Japan is a nation with very little usable land, space was *always* at a premium, so the Japanese naturally built smaller, compact cars.

When the first oil embargo occurred in 1973, the price of oil rose nearly 300%. The embargo was imposed by Saudi Arabia on the nations that had backed Israel during the Yom Kipper War. It shocked Americans into considering their car's fuel economy for the first time. Also, with the passage of the Clean Air act in 1970, consumers became aware of the dangers vehicle emission standards had on the environment. While the domestic automakers were lobbying the US government to postpone the new emission standards, Japanese automakers were already producing fuel-efficient engines that could easily comply with the new rules.

Customers that shopped around for a new ride in the mid 70's found that the "Big Three" automakers offered few automobiles with good gas mileage; but the Japanese and the Germans did. In fact, of the 10 cars offered in 1973 with the best fuel efficiency, only one of the cars had a U.S. nameplate: it was the Dodge Colt. And it was built in Japan.

When the second "oil crisis" hit in 1979, US consumers already knew how gas-efficient the foreign imports could be. The quality of Japanese-made cars had improved dramatically. They were more reliable; the paint was better; body gaps were consistent, and their market life was longer than most U.S. cars. They were relatively inexpensive, too. Americans also discovered that smaller vehicles were fun to drive.

Detroit was relying on brand loyalty to hold its market share and to their surprise-it was gone. The Japanese never sought to conquer the American automobile market; when gas became expensive, **we** turned to **them** to provide the cars we couldn't get from domestic manufacturers. By 1980, the Japanese auto companies had captured 25% of the American car market. Older AACA members may remember having to wait to buy a new Japanese or German economy car and then, having to take whatever color that car arrived in.

By the mid-1980s, as a result of the profits generated by Japan's world-wide export sales of automobiles, development money for new projects and new technologies was free flowing. With Japan recovered from the war and now one of the world's most advanced industrial nations, their government was encouraging growth in other sectors of manufacturing processes that were less dependent on expensive foreign oil. Electronics was determined to be the field with the most potential for world-wide exports.

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From 1986 to 1991, Japan designed and built some of the best performance cars in the world. In 1990, Mazda introduced a new premium brand for their Japanese home market. They called it, “Eunos” and its flagship grand touring offering was the Cosmo, the car you see pictured here. It is the Type S which



featured larger, 16” tires and a firmer suspension for better handling. The Cosmo name will be familiar to Americans who remember the first Cosmo 2-seater (1969-1974) and a later, mostly fastback model offered here from 1976-1978. All three models were rear wheel drive coupes featuring lightweight, compact Wankel rotary engines.

This last-generation Cosmo is almost completely unknown to U.S. car buyers, as only 8,875 cars were manufactured during a seven-year production run from 1990 to 1996. To ensure craftsmanship and exclusivity, production was limited. The cars were all right-hand drive and never exported outside Japan.

Today, all model years of the Eunos Cosmo are eligible for import into the U.S. because they have passed the age requirement of the Federal 25-year import restriction rule.

Costing more than a Lexus LS-400 at the time in comparable dollars, the Cosmo was a halo vehicle for the new brand and a virtual rolling showcase of both technical and electronic innovations.

Configured as a 2+2 notch-back coupe, it was only offered with an electronically controlled 4-speed automatic transmission. However, this automatic featured the world’s first Sport Mode option, that allowed the driver to hold the gears longer, thus improving acceleration times.

Powered by a standard 1.3-liter twin turbo, two-rotor Wankel rotary engine, an optional 2.0-liter twin turbo, three-rotor power plant was also offered. That’s right; a three-rotor, twin turbo engine. Horsepower was rated at 230 and 276 bhp, respectively. Set up sequentially, the smaller turbo spools up to prevent turbo lag and the second turbo kicks in afterwards to provide a sustained balance of power. This early turbo system was rated at 11 psi. and was the first system ever offered on a rotary engine. Combined MPG was 15 with a driving range of 288 miles. Zero to 60 time was a scant 6.9 seconds.

The Cosmo was built on a new platform which was never shared with any other model. With a height of only 51” the body was designed to be low and wide. With 4-wheel independent suspension featuring MacPherson struts, the Cosmo rides on control arms in the front and a multi-link suspension in the rear, which features four shock absorbers, instead of the usual two. Speed-sensitive power



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steering was standard as were anti-lock brakes with vented discs at all four corners. The wheelbase came in at 108" with very little body overhang on either end.

The interior came standard with cloth seats and is almost completely covered with matching fabric trim extending all the way up to meet the curved dash, (very similar to the new Nissan 300ZX which premiered in the States the same year). The dash was digital with analog gauges. Power folding mirrors, power door locks and power seats were standard. The seats featured electrically controlled height, bolster and lumbar adjustments.

Among the numerous electronic industry firsts to be offered on the Eunos Cosmo was a satellite based digital GPS navigation system. This early version didn't offer turn-by-turn instructions, but it showed you where you were and showed the immediate surroundings as you traveled. The system was built into Mazda's Car Control System (CCS) which featured a Panasonic CRT color touch screen. The screen controlled the automatic climate control system, optional mobile phone, the am-FM radio/cassette/audio CD player sound system, and a trip computer!

The CRT also doubled as a television which came wired with twin antennas that attached to the top of each rear fender. Another popular option positioned on the rear package shelf was a two speed air refiner (purifier), controlled from inside the center console.

The Eunos Cosmo is a pleasure to drive, and its ride is exceptionally smooth. The mark is seldom seen here in America and estimates are that fewer than 75 are currently registered in the U.S. Outside of Japan, the Cosmo is most popular in those countries that are right-hand drive, such as England and Australia.

This example was purchased from Duncan Imports of Tennessee in 2018 so the shipping, customs and import paperwork had already been completed. As a bonus, it came equipped with the set of stunning, and very rare, 17" aluminum Zaibach Racing Hart wheels that you see in West's images.

Even though the economic bubble burst for the Japanese in the early 90's, the vehicles designed and built during that period were well-constructed and full of electronic innovations and features that wouldn't be offered on other cars for many years to come.





# King of the Road Antique Car Club first ever...

Free admission  
for all fans!  
Unreserved seats  
on the 1<sup>st</sup> base line.



Alcohol and  
smoke-free  
ballpark.  
The stadium is  
"fan-conditioned"!

**Friday, July 5, 2024**  
**Dinner : 5:00 PM**  
**Game Time : 7:00 PM**

**Note:**  
New date  
and time!

at Pat Thomas Baseball Stadium  
240 Ball Park Rd., Leesburg, FL.  
[E. Dixie Ave. (CR44) off Dozier Cir.]



First, dinner at **Ski Beach Bar & Grill** [21 Dozier Cir.],  
then Florida Collegiate Summer League presents:  
**The Leesburg Lightning**

vs.

**The Winter Park Diamond Dawgs**

Seats in the shade but bring a cap, cushion and sunscreen.  
Food and soft drinks available in the ballpark too.

Contribute to the team during "Pass The Hat".

Dinner, OYO, before the game at **Ski Beach Bar & Grill**.  
Or skip dinner and meet us at the stadium for the game at 7 PM.  
Caravan from the Rohan R.R.C. [near Morse Blvd. & CR44]  
departing at 4:45 PM sharp.

**Call Jim to reserve: 352-638-0502 by 6/30**



**King of the Road Antique Car Club**  
**It's time for another**

# Ice Cream Run

**Thursday, July 18<sup>th</sup>, 2024, 7 PM**

**No reservations needed. Just show up!**



**Grill & Chill®**

**4015 CR 216, Oxford, FL. 34484**  
**(On US 301, 1 mile south of CR 466)**

