



# FOREWORD

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Since the automobile came of age over 100 years ago, it was not too long after that automotive enthusiasts were here to stay. The enthusiasts differed from the average car and truck buying public that simply bought vehicles for the transportation aspect. Auto enthusiasts had true passion for anything exciting that had four wheels.

One class of automobile that captured the hearts and minds of auto enthusiasts was the Sports Car. Sports Cars went back to the early days of antique and vintage autos to satisfy the passion and desires of those individuals that wanted to have fun behind the wheel of their automobile, not just as a means of transportation.

Early entries in the Sports Car category included well-known and classic vehicles such as the Stutz Bearcat, Auburn Boat-tail Speedster, and the Famous Cord 810. The Cord actually was built into many different body styles by one of the several body builders in business during the early pre-war years, the most famous being the coffin-nose supercharged 2-seat roadster.

Those were the most notable American marques of sports car entries. The Europeans entered the fray also in the pre-war era. Alfa-Romeo, Fiat, Auto-Union, and who could forget the Mercedes 540K, still commanding very high prices at collector car auctions.

All-new car development, including Sports Cars, went quiet during World War II for the most part, as production of cars and trucks came to a halt to support the war effort. Years ago however, I talked to friends and co-workers in the business that were employed by one or more of the Big 3 automakers during the war years that told me privately a slightly different version of what went on. Even though new model car and truck development and vehicle production was supposed to be halted



during those years to provide resources and plants to build planes and tanks, there were Styling and Engineering studios “squirreled” away where automotive projects, including Sports Cars, were secretly being developed. Even the “Big One” couldn’t stop the creative juices from flowing through the veins of those individuals that were passionate about creating the new fresh designs to capture the interest of the car buying public. Anxious were these enthusiasts that worked in the business to complete their work on the new models in anticipation of putting them into production after the war ended.

## Luxury vs. Performance

Sports Cars really fall into two major categories: the Luxury Sports class which includes modern-day vehicles like the Mercedes SL, Jaguar XK, Ferrari V12 GT, Aston-Martin. The Performance Sports class includes famous marques like the Porsche 911, Chevrolet Corvette, Ferrari V8, and of course our own now-famous Ford GT.

Both Porsche and Ferrari were the first to introduce the modern-day Performance Sports Car shortly after the end of World War II in the late 40’s. Chevrolet introduced the Corvette in 1953. Ford Motor Company countered in 1955 with the 2-seat Thunderbird, which lasted through the 1957 model year. The T-bird, however, was not really in the same vein as the Corvette. Zora-Arkus Duntov’s vision was for the Corvette to eventually be one of, if not the world

**Opposite: Final preproduction prototype, a Midnight Blue Ford GT nicknamed PB2. This was the last engineering development car to receive final approval from the GT team before actual production began.**

*Current Owner:  
J. Salomon*