

CUSTOM BUILT CARS TO BE DISPLAYED AT SHOWS

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DETROIT, Oct. 4.—The salon division of the automobile industry is getting ready for its annual New York and Chicago exhibitions. These precede the national automobile shows, which take place after January 1, next. The first of the automobile salons is to open in Chicago November 9, to be followed by a later showing in New York to begin November 30.

The salon cars embody chassis and coach craft design created to art standards comparable to those of architecture, painting, wood carving or hand-worked tapestries. A few years ago, the market for such models was limited to a relatively few millionaires whose aesthetic taste happened to call for individual cars embodying their own ideas of luxury and elegance.

STUDIO PLANTS

But like other branches of the automobile industry the production of custom-built cars also has undergone expansion. Makers whose main activity consists of stock passenger cars in the top price ranges no longer depend solely upon the custom-building shops for their special requirements. To serve the rich clientele, they have established studio plants in which months are devoted to the production of designs that cost \$15,000 to \$25,000 and upward.

General Motors maintains Fleetwood as a division of this kind, and during the present year has moved this organization from its original home at Fleetwood, Pa., to Detroit. Its chief function is to produce individualized coachwork for Cadillac.

OTHER MAKERS BUSY

Packard likewise has created its own division of custom building and

is turning out town cars, cabriolets, landaulets, and other special body types. Pierce-arrow also is fabricating salon models in addition to its production types.

The body builders such as Fisher, which produces for General Motors in volume, likewise maintain specialized divisions capable of fine artistry in design. Briggs has Le-Baron, Inc., as a subsidiary, while Murray operates Dietrich, Inc. Hayes at Grand Rapids a few months ago engaged Count de Sakonoffky, a European expert, to head a department of this kind.

The individual designers maintaining their own studio shops include Brewster, Brunn of Buffalo, N. Y., Derham, Raymond H. Dietrich, Judkins, Locke, Murphy, Rollston, Weymann and Willoughby. The talent of these is at the disposal of various makers placing special orders for de luxe body equipment.

WORK BEGINS WITH COWL

The job of the custom body designer usually begins with the cowl and extends backward. He creates new window and roof-line contours to fit a particular chassis. He originates running board style or finely turned door handles for the exterior. For the interior his scope extends to upholstery of the finest textures, to precious metal fittings and carving or embossing in rare woods to satisfy the aesthetic whim.

Hand-painting, needle-work, plating and ornamentation in leather or other de luxe materials are among his talents. Color motifs are derived from the plumage of tropical birds or the hues of precious stones.

The vogue for custom-built cars is regarded as a reflection of the high purchasing power of the present age, particularly of women. It signifies also the cultural gains that America is credited with making.