

The Kissel Motor Car Company Hartford, Wisconsin, 1906-1930

Founded by Louis Kissel and sons William and George, the vehicles produced by Kissel are now unknown to most Americans. Over a period of 25 years, Kissel hand produced about 35,000 cars, trucks, ambulances, hearses and taxis. Although production numbers were low, Kissel was a highly respected producer of well built, beautifully styled cars. Kissel stopped production in 1930 due to the Great Depression and loss of market share to less expensive, mass produced vehicles. Fewer than 150 complete Kissel vehicles exist in the world today.

The most famous Kissel model is undoubtedly the Speedster, a sporty roadster featuring "racer cut" sides and a bumble-bee or turtle-back rear deck. This design was the concept of Conover T. Silver, a New York City distributor for Kissel, working with Kissel designer J. Frederick Werner. In 1918 the company introduced the Kissel Silver Special, which was received with great enthusiasm at auto trade shows. By 1920 this body style was simply called the Speedster.

W. W. "Brownie" Rowland was an automotive writer for the Milwaukee Journal. As a promotion Brownie drove a chrome-yellow Speedster around Wisconsin for a month, calling attention for the need to improve the poor roads and inviting his readers to name the car he used. A young girl allegedly coined the name "Gold Bug" referring to the car's color and shape.

Popular with movie stars and other celebrities, Speedsters had fittings to strap a golf bag to each rear fender. No records were kept of the total number of Speedsters produced, but fewer than 35 are known to exist today.

The Kissel Model 6-55 is designated as a Full Classic™ by the Classic Car Club of America. These very special cars are "distinguished by their respective fine design, high engineering standards and superior workmanship."

Famous "Gold Bug" Owners

Fatty Arbuckle (comedian), Bebe Daniels (actress), Ralph DePalma (racecar champion), Eddie Duchin (band leader), Amelia Earhart (aviator), Douglas Fairbanks (actor), Greta Garbo (actress), Gladys George (actress), Ruby Keeler (actress), William S. Hart (actor), Al Jolson (singer), Mabel Normand (actress), Mary Pickford (actress), Rudy Vallee (singer)



For more information on Bugsby, please visit our website

<http://starship.org>

For more information on the Kissel Kar Klub and the Kissel Motor Car Company visit our bulletin board

<http://starship.org/KisselKlubBB>

Or send email to

bugsby@starship.org

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BUGSBY

"Gold Bug"



1924 Kissel
Model 6-55 Speedster

Lynn and Jeanne Kissel
Livermore, California

A Brief History of BUGSBY

1924 – Manufactured in Hartford, Wisconsin for export to Australia. Transported by rail to New York, by ship via the Panama Canal to Brisbane, by coastal ship to Bryne Motor Company, Rockhampton, Queensland. Sold to Fred Shuffener, owner of a saw mill and joinery in Rockhampton. First of twelve Kissels exported to Australia. (Colors: chrome-yellow body, black fenders, green wheels and green leather interior)

c1940 – Rear deck is chopped to form a “ute” (utility vehicle) while still owned by Fred Shuffener.

1962 – Rescued by Bob Schutt from a farm in Jam-

bin (90 miles west of Rockhampton).

1962 – Sold to Ed Ubergang.

1962 – Sold to Ron Griffiths. Moved to Ipswich (west of Brisbane).

1965 – Ron completes restoration using a 1940 Chevy roadster for missing rear deck. Refinishes body and fenders in the original colors, black interior.

1966 – Sold to Frank Illich. Moved to Sydney.

1976 – Sold at auction to Wil (Bill) Trollope.

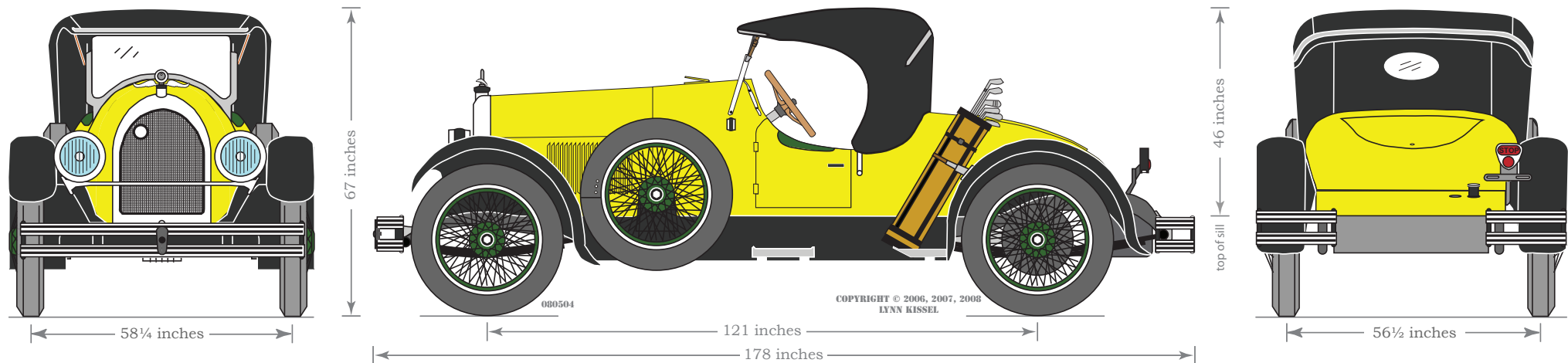
1981 – Bill completes mechanical overhaul of drive

train and refinishes body. (Colors: light-yellow body, white wheels, black fenders and interior)

2005 – Sold to Lynn Kissel. Moved to Livermore, California.

2006 – Approved to Full Classic™ status by Classic Car Club of America.

2006-8 – Lynn undertakes serious body-off freshening returning car to original colors and configuration. Restoration of rear deck and exterior paint by Kevin Schell, California Reflections (Livermore); new interior by Dino Palermo, Fowler’s Upholstery (Stockton); wheels by Maas Brothers (Livermore).



Specifications

Wheelbase121 in.
 Weight3130 lb
 Top speed75 MPH
 Fuel economy17 MPG
 Performance 0-60 MPH 30 s
 Power61 HP @ 2300 RPM
 Engine type6 cyl, L-head
 Bore x Stroke3 5/16" x 5 1/8"
 Displacement265 cid (4.34 l)

Compression4.6:1
 Clutch..... Borg & Beck DX-172
 (two bearing, single 10" dry plate)
 Trans Warner 3sp (1-3.11/2-1.69/3-1.00/R-3.78)
 Final drive ratio4.09:1
 Oil / water capacity 10 U.S. qt. / 19 U.S.qt.
 Gas tank capacity18 U.S. gal.
 Brakes 2 wheel, mechanical
 (4 wheel, hydraulic, optional)

Steering Ross cam and lever
 (1 1/2 turns lock-to-lock)
 Turning radius40 ft.
 Suspension Semi-elliptical leaf springs
 Tires..... 5.25/5.50-20
 Sheet metal20 gauge body (0.0359")
 18 gauge fenders (0.0478")
 Cost when new \$2185 F.O.B Factory
 Kissel 1924 production, all models 803

(Compare with a 1924 Ford Model T Runabout: Cost ... \$350; Weight ... 1540 lb; Ford 1924 production, all models 1,993,419)