

# THE ICONIC FORD FALCON XB GT

SCALE  
1:8



Right door



American Compact Cars



GM EV1

## POST-APOCALYPTIC EDITION

# THE ICONIC FORD FALCON XB GT

## ISSUE 5

### ASSEMBLY GUIDE

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Begin the assembly of the right door by fixing the handle and the side mirror to the exterior panel.

### HISTORY OF THE FORD FALCON

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At the end of the 1950s, there was a need for a new range of compact cars in the USA.

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*Thelma and Louise* enjoy their adventures in a 1966 Ford Thunderbird convertible.

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The development of electric vehicles started with small commuter car options such as the GM EV1.

## YOUR MODEL

You will be building a 1:8 scale replica of a customised 1973 Ford Falcon XB GT. Features include a lift-up bonnet that reveals a detailed engine, opening doors, wind-down windows and an 'active' steering wheel. A remote-control fob illuminates the main lights, brake lights and indicators.

Scale: 1:8  
Length: 62cm  
Width: 25cm  
Height: 19cm  
Weight: 7+kg



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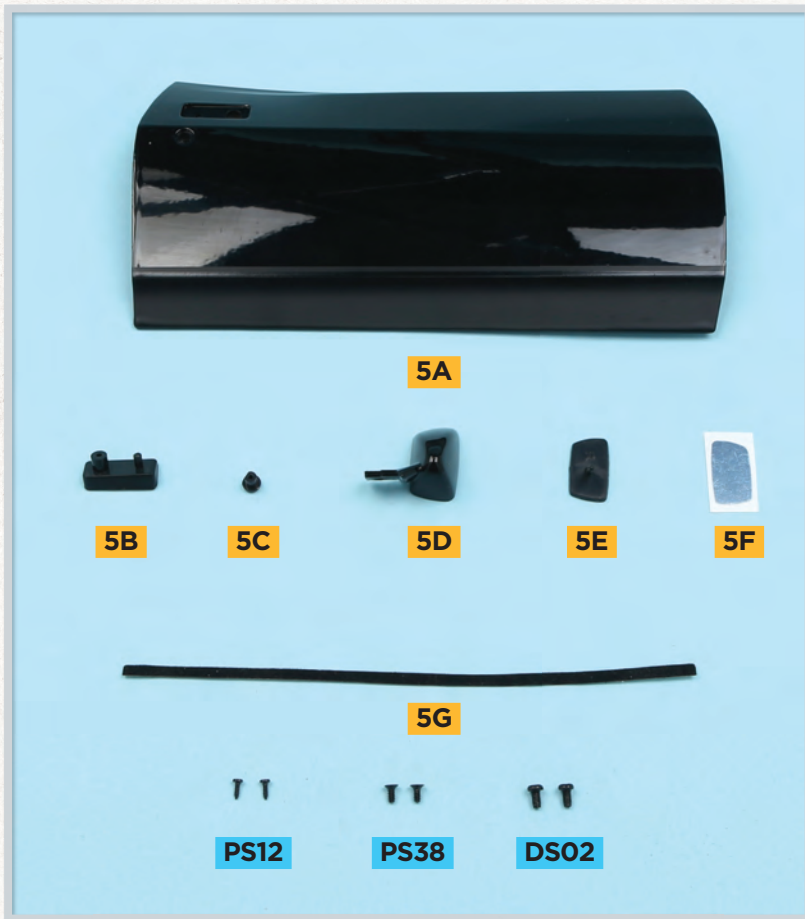
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t=top, c=centre, b=bottom, l=left, r=right, u=upper

# Stage 5: Right Door (1)

In this issue, work begins on the first door, fitting the handle, keyhole and mirror.



## List of parts:

- 5A** Right door
- 5B** Door handle
- 5C** Door keyhole
- 5D** Mirror housing
- 5E** Mirror plate
- 5F** Reflective mirror sticker
- 5G** Window sliding felt band
- PS12** Two\* 1.2 x 4mm PB screws
- PS38** Two\* 1.8 x 4mm PB screws
- DS02** Two\* 2.3 x 4.0 mm PM screws

\* Including spare

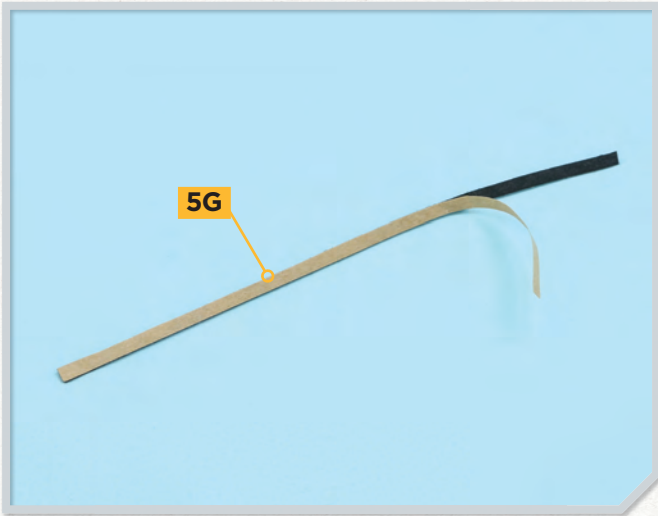
PB = Pan head for plastic

PM = Pan head for metal

## Area of assembly

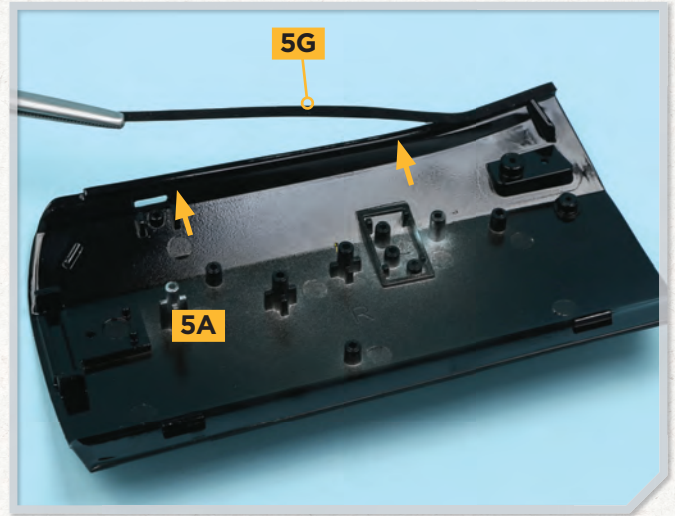


## Stage 5: Right Door (1)



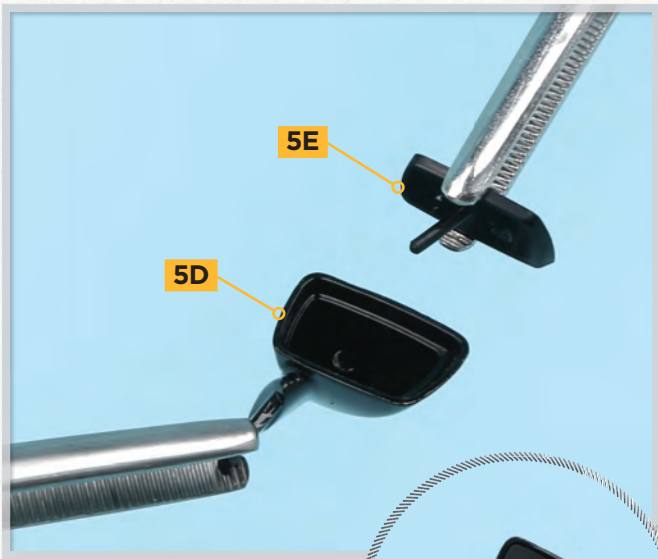
### STEP 1

Take the window felt **5G** and peel away the protective backing.



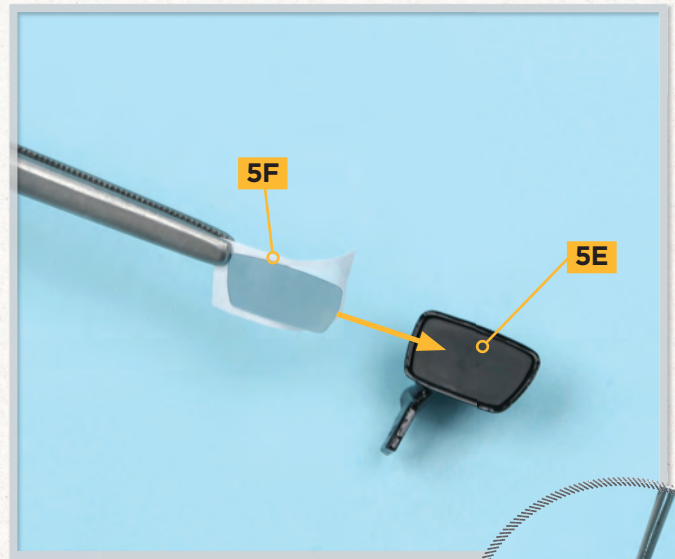
### STEP 2

Apply the window felt **5G** along the top of the inside edge of the door **5A**, as indicated by the arrows. Align the top of the felt with the top edge of the door. Trim away any felt that hangs over the end of the door.



### STEP 3

Take the two parts of the mirror **5D** and **5E**. Fit them together so that the pin on the back of part **5E** fits into the socket in part **5D** and the edges of the mirror plate fit into the rim in part **5D**. If necessary, use a pointed file or similar to slightly enlarge the hole in part **5D**. This is a push-fit connection.



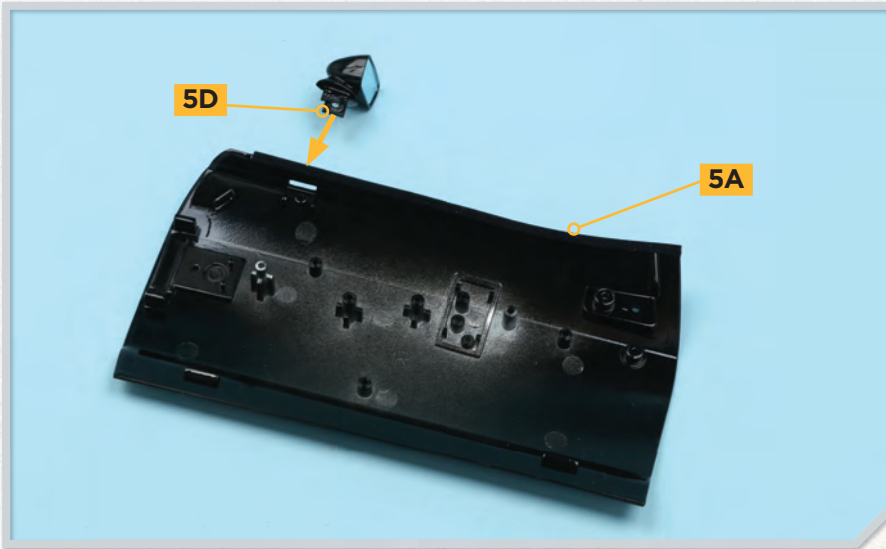
### STEP 4

Take the reflective mirror **5F** and peel it away from the protective backing. Stick it in place on the mirror plate **5E**. Note that the mirror has a protective film. You can peel this off (inset) or leave it in place until later to ensure you do not damage the surface of the mirror.



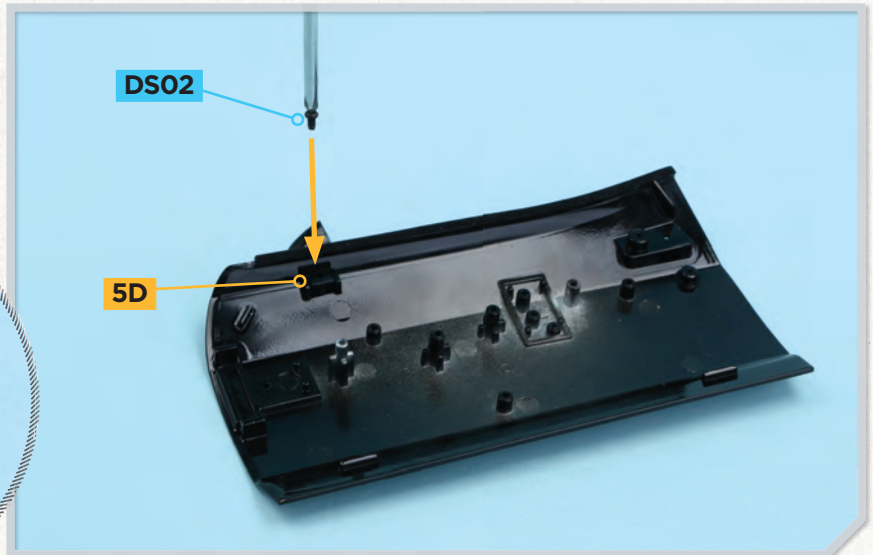
## STEP 5

Take the door **5A** and identify the fixing point for the mirror: the tab on part **5D** fits through the slot in the top of the door.



## STEP 6

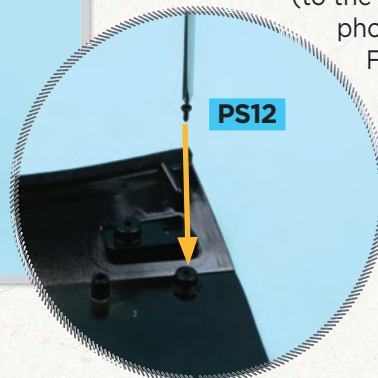
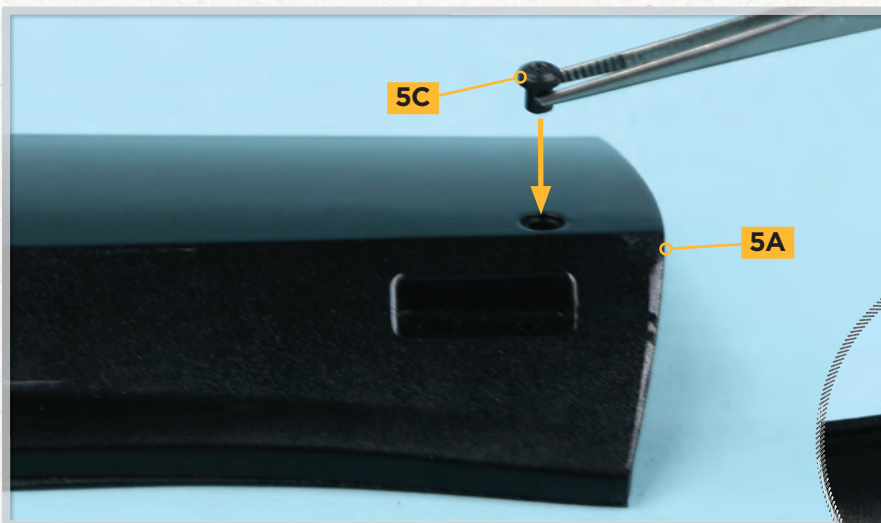
Fix the mirror in place with a **DS02** screw. The inset below shows the mirror in place, viewed from the outside of the door.



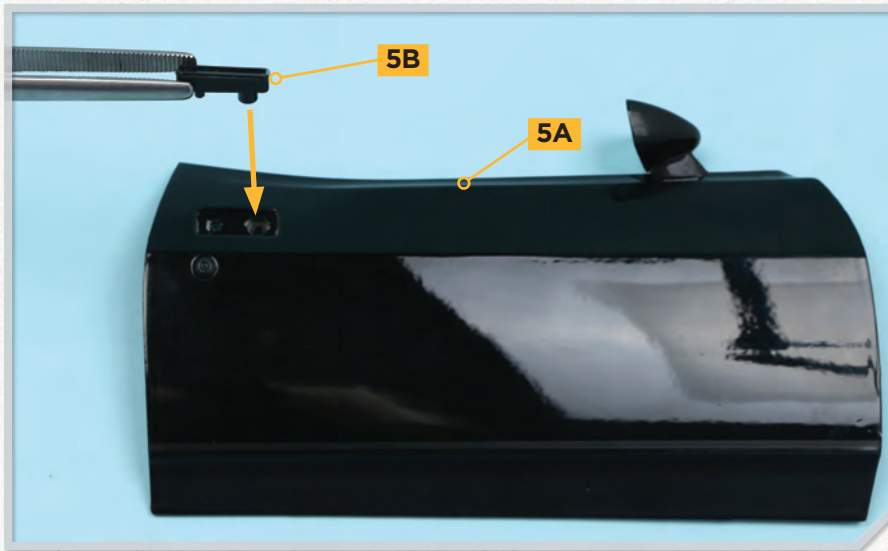
## STEP 7

Take the keyhole **5C** and fit it into the large single socket in the door **5A**. Note that one side of the keyhole is flat and this should face towards the edge of the door (to the right in the photograph).

From behind, fix in place with a **PS12** screw.



## Stage 5: Right Door (1)



### STEP 8

Identify the fixing point for the door handle **5B**. The screw socket on part **5B** fits into the large socket in part **5A** (arrow) and a peg on part **5B** fits into the smaller hole.

### STEP 9

Turn the door over and fix the door handle in place with a **PS38** screw.



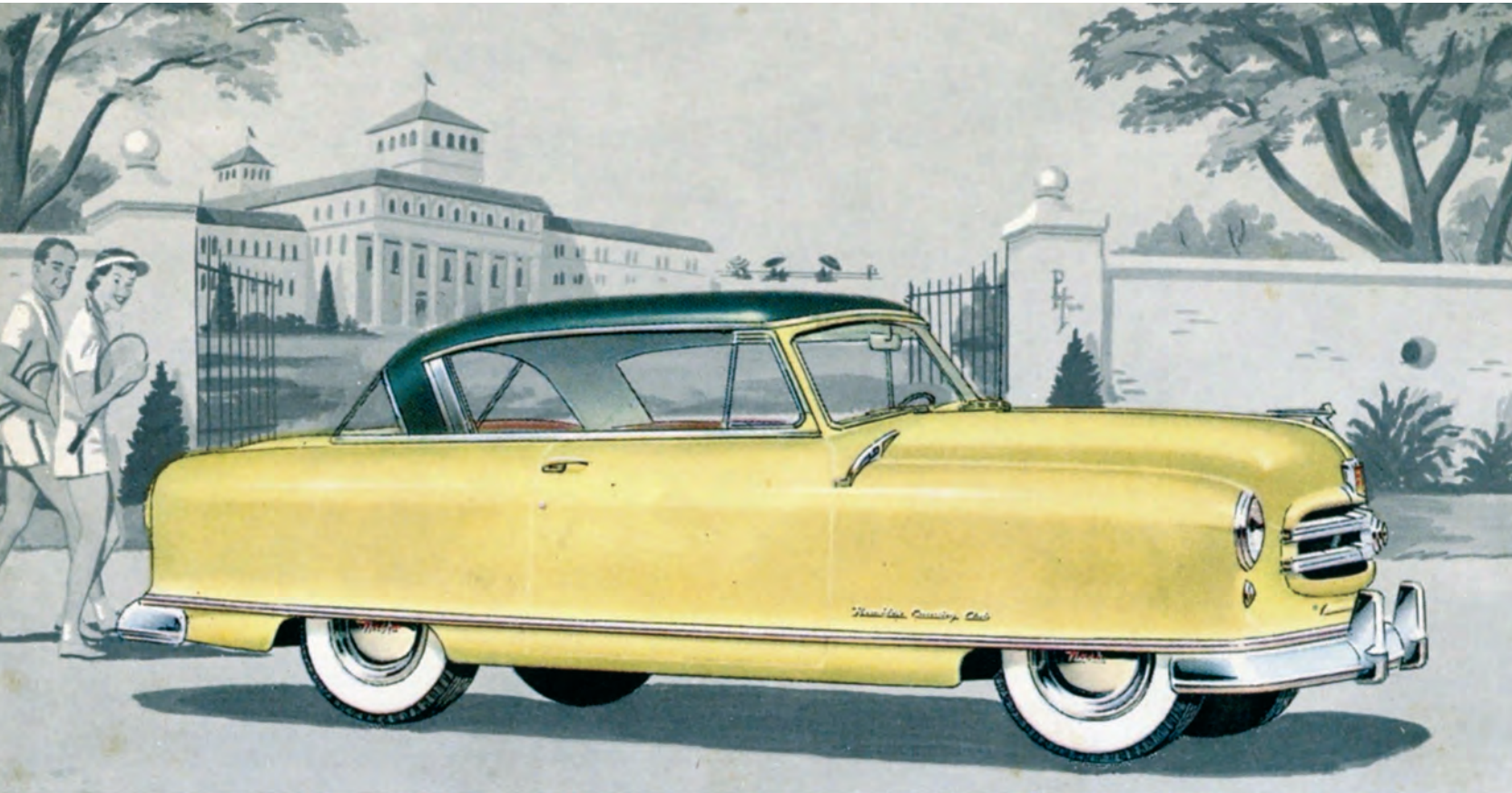
### COMPLETED ASSEMBLY

The mirror, door handle and keyhole have been fitted to the right-hand door.

# Complacency to Compact

## THE AMERICAN CAR MARKET

The American car market developed rapidly in the first decades of the 20th century, but there was a gap in the compact car market, which led to the arrival of VW.



*Nash Rambler Country Club*

It is often said that Ford's ubiquitous Model T motorised the world but in reality it motorised the USA and some other nations, not the whole world. Other countries adopted the car at different times throughout the 20th century as their individual economic and social circumstances converged, allowing a local manufacturer to produce a vehicle that changed that nation's social fabric. In the UK it was the 1922

Austin 7, in Italy the 1936 Fiat 500 'Topolino' played a similar role, and there are many other examples such as the Morris Oxford-based Hindustan Ambassador in India.

It is undeniable, however, that the 1908 Model T was the first car to be made in large numbers, and that American manufacturers were at the cutting edge of the technical development of the motor car during the first half of the 20th century. The first production line

The Nash Rambler, launched in 1950, is widely accepted as being the first modern compact car to be released on the American market.

was actually developed for the 1901 'Curved Dash' Oldsmobile, although Ford refined it and took it to a whole new level. The first car to be made in such a way that all parts between examples were interchangeable, without alteration, (early Model Ts were quite 'fettled' by production

## Complacency to Compact



The diminutive Austin 7 motorised the UK in much the same way the Model T had in the USA. This 1926 model is joining the Austin 7 centenary run at the Goodwood Revival in 2022.

workers) was the Cadillac Model K. In recognition of that fact, Henry Leland's company was awarded the prestigious Dewar Trophy for engineering in 1908 at Brooklands, in the UK.

Cadillac's attention to detail and small engineering tolerance production techniques spawned their advertising slogan 'Standard of the World'. Although they were taken over by the nascent General Motors (GM) in July 1909, Cadillac won the Dewar Trophy again in 1912 because they had pioneered both the electric self-starter (the final nail in the coffin of both steam and electric cars) and electric lighting for a production car. The automatic gearbox was also an American development, popularised by GM in the late 1930s: by 1957 over 80 percent of new cars sold in the US featured it. US company Budd

Manufacturing pioneered the use of steel to create bodies for the Dodge brothers in 1917, while in-car radio and power steering were also US introductions.

### WORKING THE MARKET

The American automotive industry's technical progress was stimulated by the highly competitive free market in which it operated. It was an arena that rewarded innovation with profitable sales because in the early 20th century, the USA had a huge population (106,021,537 in 1920) a high percentage of whom could afford a car.

The natural consequence of this success was that American cars grew ever larger and more ambitious. At the forefront of that was Cadillac, whose 1931 catalogue offered cars powered by their small 353ci (5,785cc) V8, their medium-sized 368ci (6,030cc) V12, and a mammoth 452ci (7,407cc) V16. Packard, Duesenberg, Pierce-Arrow and others offered similarly powerful competition. Even small American cars had become large, thirsty and powerful compared to vehicles produced outside the USA.

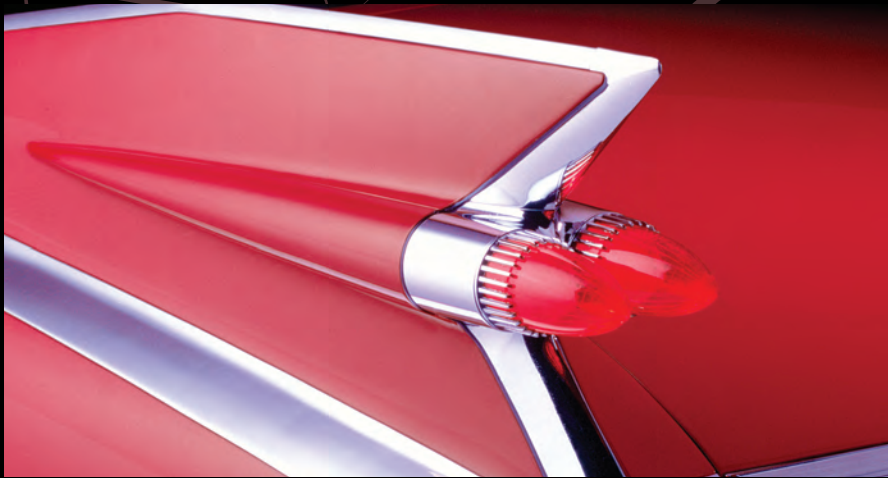
Ford brought the V8 to the masses in 1932 (after Chevrolet's stalled attempt in 1917) and in doing so launched a thousand hot rodders, and, famously, received a letter of thanks from bank robber Clyde Barrow who preferred to steal Ford V8s. He ended his missive by saying, "... even if my business hasn't been strictly legal it don't hurt anything to tell you what a fine car you got in the V8."

American manufacturers were responding to demand; even after the Wall Street crash of 1929, sales recovered within two years and the market demanded large, powerful cars, capable of covering big distances on unmade roads. The sort of space issues suffered by those using a car in London were not an issue anywhere in the USA, so there was no demand for smaller cars. By the late 1930s, America's big three had become so successful that, on the eve of Germany's invasion of Poland, which triggered World War II, GM's Chairman, Alfred P. Sloan, is reputed to have said at a stockholders meeting, "We are too big to be affected by petty international squabbles."

In the victorious post-war era, the US government's incentives to create an even more consumer-driven society had converged with the car becoming a mature industrial product; drivers could get in a car made by any manufacturer and expect the same controls, the same level of roadworthiness, the same kind of heating and ventilation. The manufacturers were left with one easy way left to differentiate their products, style! Harley J. Earl at GM led this trend.

**The American market demanded large, powerful cars, capable of covering big distances on unmade roads.**





American cars were envied for their style. The fins of the 1959 Cadillac Eldorado, with tail lights that looked like flames trailing from a rocket, were typical of the post-war style contest.

## POST-WAR CHANGES

While the US manufacturers worked out new ways to spear any cyclist unlucky enough to rear-end a Chevrolet Bel Air or Plymouth Fury, American society was changing. Families were moving out to the suburbs, which were designed around having a car, pushed out by the USA's inexorable rise in population, from 132,164,569 in 1940 to 203,211,926 in 1970. More and more women were learning to drive and entering the workforce, the economic boom seemed never-ending and suddenly it seemed utterly sensible to have two cars per family. US surveys showed that the same group of young women drivers didn't like the be-finned land yachts and preferred something smaller with better gas mileage, especially at the slow urban speeds common on short journeys.

Detroit's big three initially missed this trend, while various small manufacturers, such as Crosley, attempted to create an all-American small car, but failed commercially. The 1950 Nash Rambler was considered a compact despite its 2.8-litre straight-6: it was certainly considerably cheaper than anything made by the big three but, at 176 inches long, it could hardly be considered small by European

standards. It sold over 11,000 units in its first year and over 50,000 the next, thanks to expanding the range to include a wagon and a 2-door hardtop. Nash's adverts majored on their value, making them unappealing to young people who

wanted cheap and cool. It was left to imports to provide that, be it MG sports cars or a strange rear-engined air-cooled car that looked like a bug. In 1950, few would have guessed the profound effect it would have on the American car market because of the 6.6 million new cars sold in America, a mere 330 of them were Volkswagens. That was before the advertising started, however. Within five years the big three were all planning cars to rival this small idiosyncratic phoenix, which was rising inexorably from the ashes of the recently defeated Germany. ■

## Harley J. Earl (1893–1969)

Earl joined General Motors in 1930, having learned his craft at his father's coachbuilding company in California. At GM, Earl set about revolutionising how cars were designed. His radical ideas were shown on a series of concept cars, including the 1938 Buick Y-Job (below). His equally radical production designs led a post-war arms race among US manufacturers as they competed to put ever more outrageous designs on basically the same chassis every year.



# Thelma and Louise (1991)

In the male-dominated film industry it was rare for women to have any real voice or authority. *Thelma and Louise* was a unique exception that burst free from convention. Their means of escape was a 1966 Ford Thunderbird convertible.

**T**helma and Louise is a film firmly in the tradition of the American road movie. The lead characters take off down the open highway in search of thrills and adventure. Instead they run into a series of nasty guys, are assaulted, robbed and end up fugitives chased by the FBI after Thelma shoots dead a man who attacks Louise. This is not your typical counterculture car chase flick. The film is notable for having two female leads; more than that, they are likeable and plausible – not damsels in distress awaiting rescue by a man.

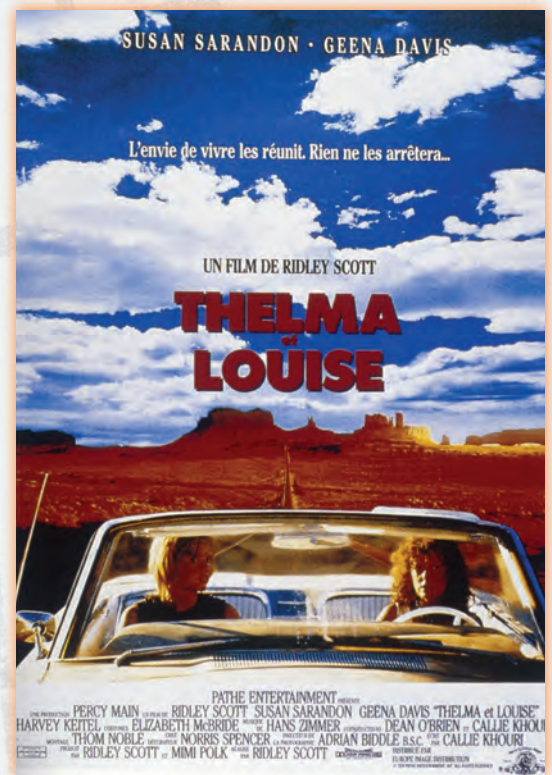
Even rarer was that the film's scriptwriter was also a woman. Callie Khouri had been directing music videos and based Thelma and Louise on her friendship with country singer Pam Tillis. "I wasn't

writing the kind of movie that got made," she explained, "I was writing the movie I wanted to see."

Susan Sarandon was cast as Louise, taking the role on the agreement that, as per the script, (spoiler alert) her character died at the end. Playing opposite was Geena Davis as Thelma. To prepare, both women trained in stunt driving and shooting until driving while delivering dialogue became second nature. "I hated that car," laughed Sarandon, "I was driving too fast for weeks after..."

**Right: The film poster sets the scene for an American road trip film, which saw success around the world.**

**Below: Louise (Susan Sarandon) takes the wheel with Thelma (Geena Davis) alongside, ready for adventure.**



Right: Clothing, attitudes and scenery took a dusky, downward turn as the women look for an escape route.

## CAR CHOICE

Khouri's script depicted Louise's car as "a bright red 1966 Impala convertible." It was changed to a 1966 Ford Thunderbird convertible since its roomy interior and soft top that completely disappeared under the bootlid made it easier to film the action. Director Ridley Scott felt it was her dream vehicle, "She probably goes over it with a Kleenex and a toothpick after she's cleaned it."

The 1966 Ford Thunderbird was a full-size luxury car and the final year for the convertible model - it wouldn't return until 2002. Launched in 1955 as a rival to



## Film Facts

**Title:** Thelma and Louise

**Release date:** May 1991

**Running time:** 129 Minutes

**Director:** Ridley Scott

**Producers:** Ridley Scott,  
Mimi Polk Gitlin

**Released by:** Metro-Goldwyn-  
Mayer/Pathé Communications

**Production companies:** MGM,  
Pathé Entertainment,  
Percy Main Productions,  
Star Partners III Ltd

**Writer:** Callie Khouri

**Cinematography:** Adrian Biddle

**Editor:** Thom Noble

**Composer:** Hans Zimmer

### Cast:

Louise Sawyer.....**Susan Sarandon**

Thema Dickinson.....**Geena Davis**

Hal Slocumb.....**Harvey Keitel**

Jimmy Lennox.....**Michael Madsen**

Darryl Dickinson.....**Christopher  
McDonald**

FBI Agent.....**Stephen Tobolowsky**

J.D.....**Brad Pitt**

Halran Puckett.....**Timothy Carhart**

Lena (Waitress).....**Lucinda Jenney**

Chevrolet's sporty Corvette, both were nimble two-seaters but it was always Ford's intention for the Thunderbird to become a luxury car with a sportscar image. The four-seater version debuted in 1958 and sales almost doubled.

By 1966 the T-Bird weighed well over two tonnes, but its seven-litre V8 could haul it to 60mph (96.5 km/h) in under nine seconds. Most of the 69,176 cars built were coupés, Louise's being one of just 5,049 convertibles that were produced and it appears to

be Turquoise, despite being called 'green' three times in the film.

Five Thunderbirds were purchased for \$115,000, then re-painted and had their interiors dyed white. A mint condition 'hero car' was used for exterior filming, another to mount cameras, plus two stunt cars (one rigged for fast driving in reverse), and a spare.

## SENDING A MESSAGE

"It's not just the story of two women going on a crime spree," explains Becky Aikman, author of

### The 'Bird Flies.

The film's climax sees the Thunderbird sail into the Grand Canyon. This stunt had to be performed twice since the first Thunderbird didn't fly up and straight as intended, but plummeted rear end first. The jump cars were converted from coupés with the steel roof cut off as they were lighter

without the convertible framework and power roof motors in the rear.

As well as extra strengthening in the floor, engines were removed then the cars towed up a ramp from a specially constructed pulley system attached to a Jeep. The second attempt went perfectly.



The closing scene was set in the Grand Canyon, but permission was not granted to film there, so the production team moved to Fossil Point, near Moab, Utah to set the 'Bird flying.

*Off The Cliff; The Making of Thelma and Louise (2017)*, “the story arises out of things that make women crazy in real life; disrespect, sexism, sexual assault, being harassed... watching two characters fight back is immensely satisfying for the audience.” In response to criticism about the film being overtly feminist, anti-male or too violent Aikman points out that *DieHard 2* contained 264 deaths without public outcry, while

Geena Davis noted that, “only three people died and two of them were Thelma and Louise...”

The suicidal ending to the film is shocking, unpredictable and proved unpopular with some audiences. Scott considered having Louise shove Thelma from the car to safety and in one early edit added a shot of the car driving away after the jump; audiences hated that even more. So the film fades out as Thelma and Louise are

still in mid-air. “They flew away out of this world, free from all the shackles that restrain them,” explained Khouri. She went on to win the Academy Award for best screenplay for the film script.

One Thunderbird caught fire during filming and two were destroyed by jumps, leaving a pair that survived filming. One of these was auctioned in 2008 for \$71,500. The remaining car was auctioned, but not sold, in 2020. ■



# The General Motors EV1: Ahead of its Time

Every major manufacturer in the high-volume market now offers an electric vehicle option in its range. But the development of electric vehicles started with small commuter car options such as the GM EV1.

**A**s the world reached the second quarter of the 21st century, the era of the electric car had arrived. And by 2050 it is expected that there will be no new cars with internal combustion engines offered to the motoring public. The future plans of General Motors are an indication of how the automotive giants see the future.

GM forecast sales of between 200,000 and 300,000 electric cars in 2024 and remains on course to have completely phased out cars with internal combustion engines

by 2035. Some idea of the scope of its thinking can be gained from the fact that their current range of US brands with electric power include Chevrolet, Cadillac, and GMC Trucks, covering all types of vehicles from economy cars, trucks and SUVs to luxury sedans. There is even an electric option of the Hummer, originally designed for the US Army and now also offered to civilian customers who truly believe that 'biggest is best'.

Outside the USA, it is certain that electric vehicles built by GM

**Above: The GM EV1, launched in 1996, was a purpose-built electric vehicle, not a conversion of an existing car.**

subsidiaries Opel in Europe, Vauxhall in Britain and Holden in Australia will eventually displace current products with conventional internal combustion engines.

General Motors was the first of the world's automotive giants to put an electric car into the mass market when, in 1996, it offered the GM EV1 to environmentally-aware motorists and cash-conscious

# General Motors EV1

commuters. This was a compact car originally designed in response to a mandate by the California Air Resources Board putting the leading US-automakers on notice that they should eventually be producing and selling zero-emissions vehicles in order to maintain access to the California market. GM interpreted this as a sign that electric cars were the future. They began investing the first of the many billions of dollars they have since invested in that segment of the market.

## INITIAL DEVELOPMENT

The EV1 was developed from the Chevrolet Impact, a 'concept car' displayed at the 1990 Los Angeles Auto Show and its impact was, indeed, strong enough for GM to develop it as a mass-market production car for 1996. One reason for this was that the prototype Impact achieved a speed of 183mph (294.5k/h) during testing, far beyond what was then thought possible for an electric car.

The EV1's designers focussed on the twin factors of light weight and a wind-cheating aerodynamic profile, but its specification had very little in the way of any cost-saving use of components shared

**Motor industry analysts have estimated that each EV1 cost the company between \$80,000 and \$100,000 – over a billion dollars in total!**

with existing models. These factors contributed to the car's high development costs of \$350 million US dollars as well as its high production costs for the first models that went on sale in 1996.

Initial sales were slow. In fact, to try and tempt the public of that period to 'go electric', GM did not actually sell the EV1 to customers but instead introduced favourably-priced leasing programmes in various US states that fit their marketing projections. Deliveries to the lessees began on 5 December 1996 but in its first year on the market GM leased just 288 cars. The company acknowledged concerns regarding the outdated lead-acid battery technology and the car's restricted range as well as the EV1's relatively high price when compared to that of conventional small cars. GM justified its existence on that future battery technology already under development would change the situation. The reasoning

was proved correct with the introduction of the second generation in 1999. Noteworthy improvements included lower production costs, quieter operation, extensive weight reduction and a new type of battery. A total of 457 second generation GM EV1s were produced and leased to customers.

Despite the improved battery technology, however, customer numbers were still miniscule. In 2001, the decision was taken to axe the EV1 programme and, early in 2002, GM enacted a clause in the lease contract that allowed it to recall all cars from the lessees. Despite the fact that customer perception of the EV1 was still highly positive, the actual numbers of those customers were far too small to have any positive impact on GM finances.

Motor industry analysts have since estimated that each EV1, including research, development and other associated costs, cost the company something between US\$80,000 and US\$100,000 – over a billion dollars in total!

By the end of August 2004, General Motors had reclaimed all leased EV1s and sent them to car crushers to be scrapped. A small number had their power units deactivated and were donated to museums and colleges. And one was sent to Disneyworld for use in its 'Motoring on Main Street' exhibit – a somewhat ironic fate for a car that, although a monumental costly failure in its day, did set its makers on the path to equally high profits in the electric vehicle world of the future. ■



**Left: The EV1 was certainly compact – a two-door vehicle with an overall length of 169.7 in (4,310 mm). With no need for a large grille, styling was smooth. Paint options included dark green or red and silver, with black window frames.**



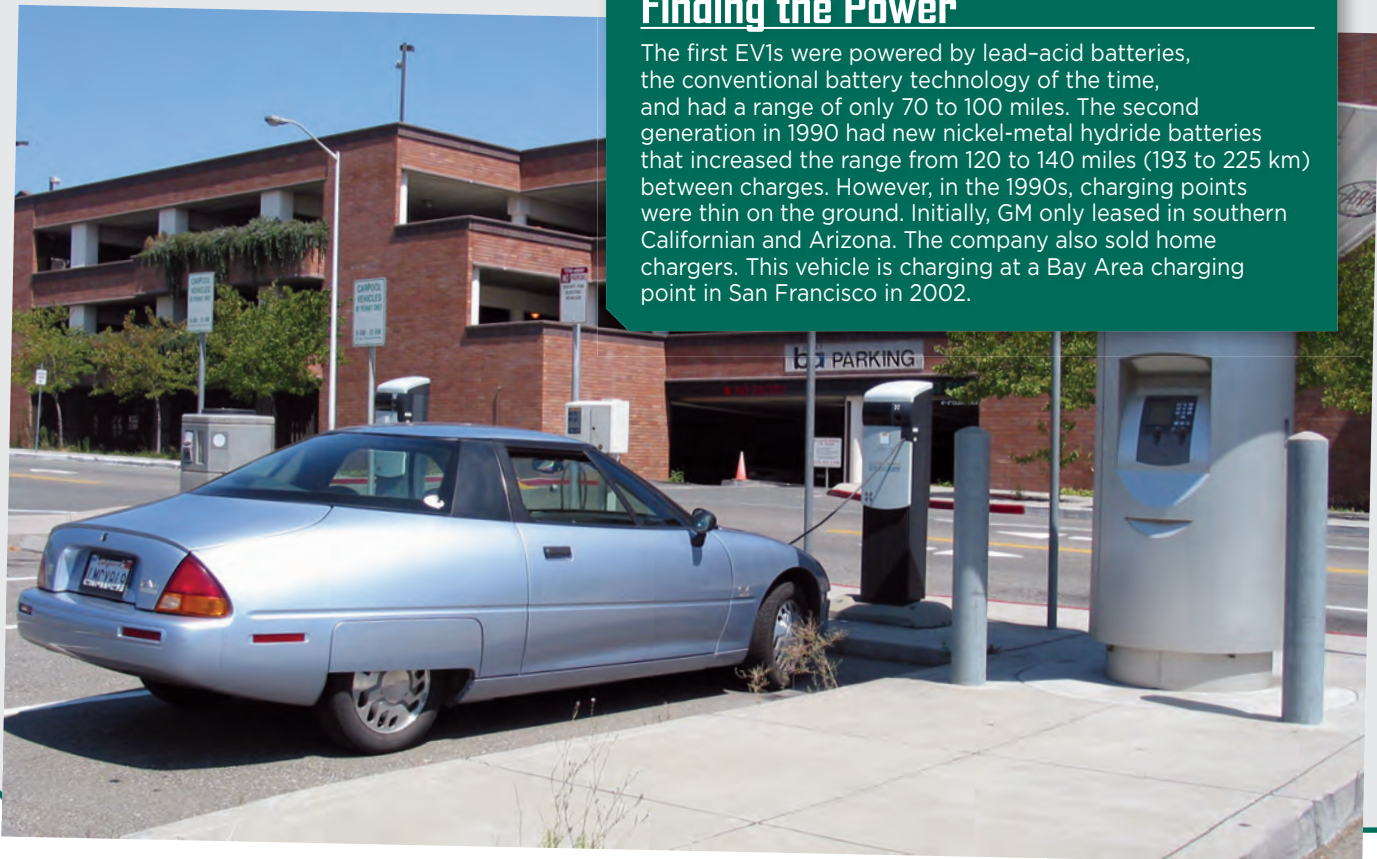
## Rare View

By the end of 1999, a total of only 1,117 EV1 vehicles had been produced, and GM was having second thoughts as to whether electric vehicles were really the future of motoring.



## Finding the Power

The first EVs were powered by lead-acid batteries, the conventional battery technology of the time, and had a range of only 70 to 100 miles. The second generation in 1990 had new nickel-metal hydride batteries that increased the range from 120 to 140 miles (193 to 225 km) between charges. However, in the 1990s, charging points were thin on the ground. Initially, GM only leased in southern California and Arizona. The company also sold home chargers. This vehicle is charging at a Bay Area charging point in San Francisco in 2002.



# COMING IN ISSUE 6



## • ASSEMBLY GUIDE

Assembly continues on the right door, fitting the window and winding mechanism.

## • HISTORY OF THE FORD FALCON

Was the European Falcon Mk1 a missed opportunity?

## • CARS ON SCREEN

The car as the star in the Bond movie *Quantum of Solace* (2008) was an Aston Martin DBS.

## • CUSTOM MADE

We begin a style guide to the complex language of customisation.

## NEW PARTS

Window for right door, large, medium and small cogs, door hinge and spring plate, window sliding base part and mounting plus screws.



Published weekly

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AUS: \$21.99



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