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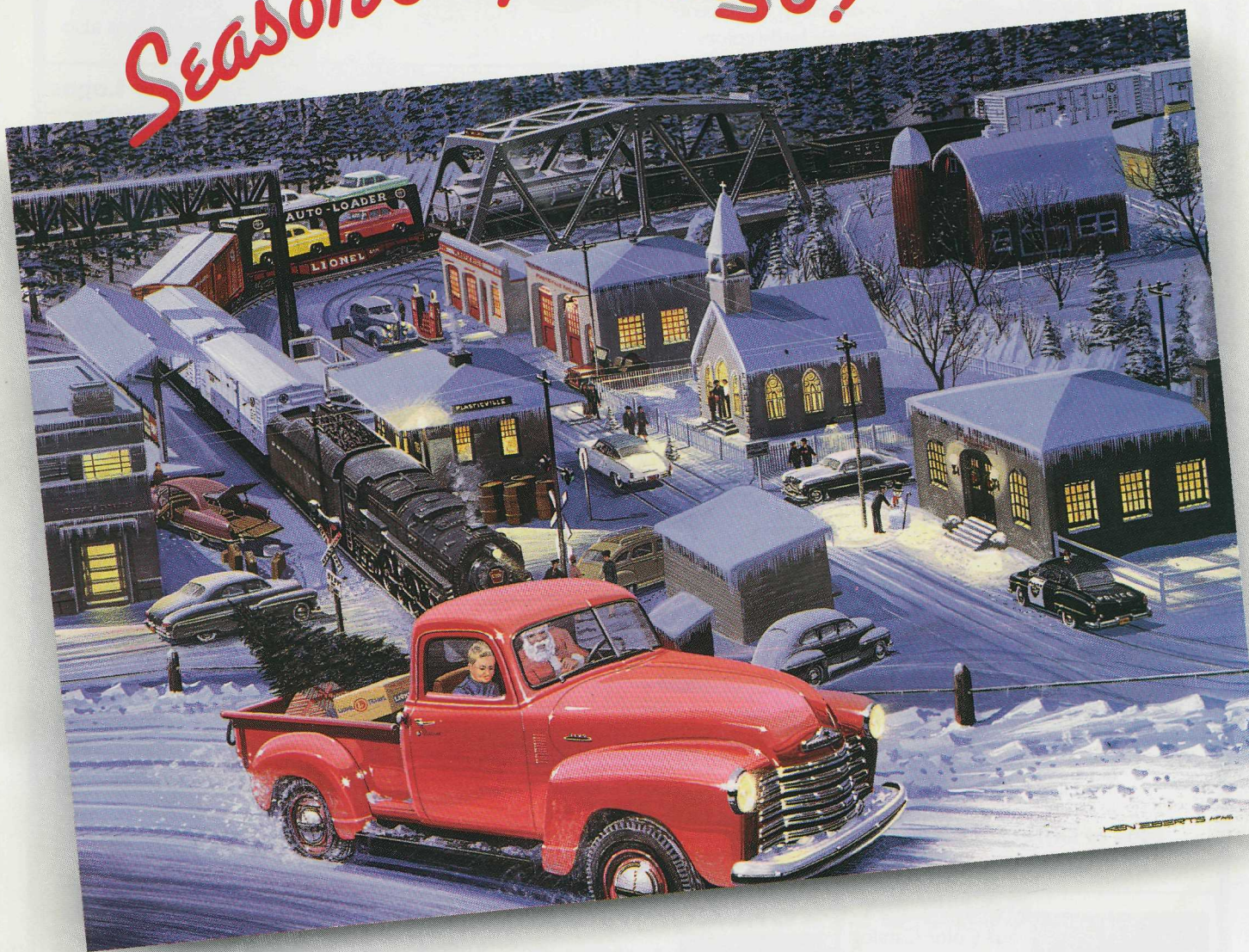
Automobile Collectibles

# MOBILIA®

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# Museum Celebrates a Century of Automobile History

**Tom Funk**

SYRACUSE, NY—The much-anticipated Museum of Automobile History opened its doors October 22 in Syracuse, New York, unveiling to an appreciative audience the world's largest private collection of automobilia. A few days prior to the public opening, on Thursday, October 17, founder Walter Miller and his staff gave *MOBILIA* and a couple hundred other guests a preview of the stunning new museum. A formal ribbon-cutting by the Hon. Roy A. Bernardi, mayor of Syracuse, kicked off an evening of food, drink, and admiration of a fabulous collection—a collection that once prompted comedian and automobile collector Jay Leno to exclaim, “best stuff!”

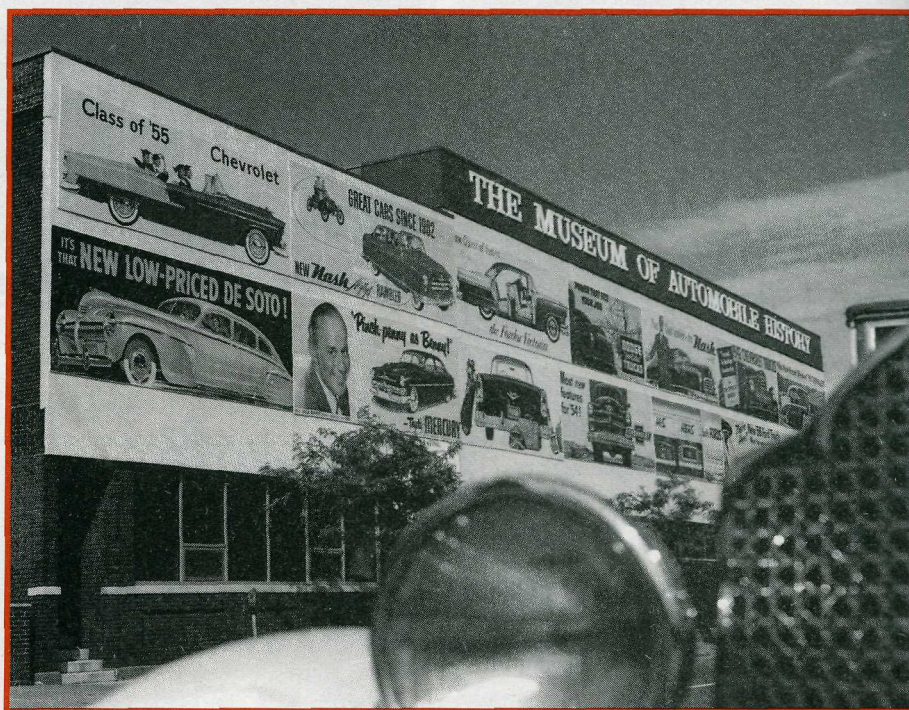
The museum's trove of advertising items, posters, toys, models, design drawings, fine art, folk art, and more is guaranteed to stir the passions of any automobile enthusiast or pop culture aficionado. Handsome displays cover the entire first century of the automobile age, with over 10,000 items on well over 1,000 makes of automobiles, motorcycles, and trucks.

“There isn't a person living in America today whose life wasn't influenced or shaped by the automobile,” says Walter Miller of his inspiration for the project. The institution grew out of his lifelong collection—which he built over 30 years of roaming flea markets and antique shops the world over in search of fine automobilia. By the time he was ready to display it publicly, Miller needed 12,000 square feet, with 25-ft. ceilings.

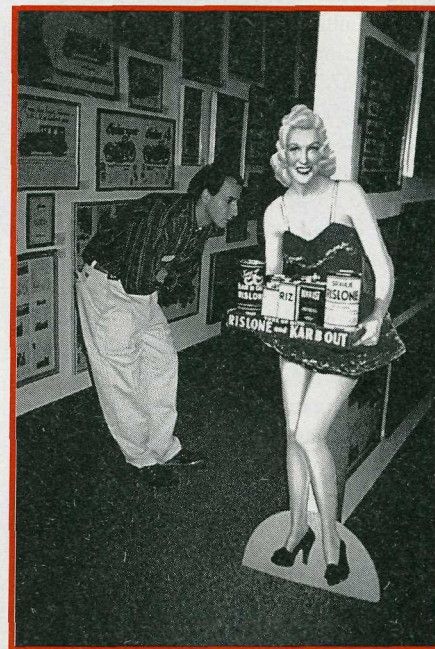
Outside, the Museum of Automobile History literally stops traffic with its 20 authentic billboards advertising American family cars of the Forties, Fifties, and Sixties. Inside, the space is striking, modern, and well lit. Specially designed by Syracuse architect Robert Levy, the interior shows off the automobilia within to its best advantage: colorful billboards soar overhead, vintage Burma-Shave signs stretch into the distance, a diecut Rislone girl welcomes visitors.

“The main focus,” says Miller, “is that there is no focus. Most collectors are into one aspect or another of the automobile—mascots, for instance, or a particular type of car like the Packard. My eye has taken in anything related to the car. That's the effect that I want.”

Among the many enthusiasts, journalists, and political figures present at the opening gala were some familiar faces in the automobilia hobby: auto literature dealer David Kayser, collector Jim Sandoro, and *MOBILIA*'s Eric Killorin and Tom Funk.



**Top: The dramatic façade of the Museum of Automobile History—replete with original, full-color billboards. Above (from left): Dydia Delyser; Walter Miller; James Sandoro; museum architect Robert Levy; and *MOBILIA* editor Tom Funk. Right: The museum's fabulous collection includes this diecut sign for Rislone and Karb Out products.**



Walter Miller's dream of a world-class automobilia museum has come to fruition, and triumphantly so. The collection and its display are just breathtaking. The Museum of Automobile History is a can't-miss destination for any automobile enthusiast traveling or living in the Northeast.

“People of any age,” says Miller, “can emerge from the Museum of Automobile History with an understanding of why the auto has been the single most important invention of our time, or of all time.”

*Admission is \$5 for adults, \$3 for children and senior citizens. Groups of over 20 people receive 20% discount. The museum is open 10 a.m. to 6:30 p.m., and closed Mondays and major holidays. For more information contact the Museum of Automobile History, 321 North Clinton Street, Syracuse, NY 13202; TEL 315-478-CARS (2277); FAX 315-432-8256.*