



## **10+ Questions With...**

*Fabulous Fiberglass Feature Co-Chairmen*

**H. DeWayne Ashmead and Geoff Hacker**

**1. Can you give us a brief history of fiberglass vehicles?**

GH: What we know as “fiberglass” was created back in the 1930’s and was showcased in the 1939 New York World’s Fair by Owens Corning. The first fiberglass car was designed and built by Henry Ford in 1941, Stout and Darrin built prototypes in 1946 and in 1949-1950 the Kurtis Sports Car was the first production sports car to utilize fiberglass fenders, hood and trunk on some of their cars. Fiberglass sports cars which could be purchased and/or built by the public first debuted at the November 1951 Petersen Motorama.

**2. This Feature is divided into two specific areas: Forgotten Fiberglass and Famous Fiberglass. Why was this marque divided?**

GH: Fiberglass sports cars have a rich and varied history, much of which has been forgotten. In the same year as the fiberglass bodied Corvette debuted (1953) approximately 20 other fiberglass sports cars were being built and sold across America. We are honored to showcase some of these “lost” cars from the heritage of American sports car design at the Milwaukee Masterpiece this year.

**3. What can guests expect from each class?**

GH: From the “Forgotten” side, patrons of the Masterpiece will see some of the only – and in some cases *the* only – fiberglass cars remaining from the marques they represent, The Covington Tiburon for example. From the “Famous” side, the Masterpiece attendees will see the best of what fiberglass had to offer in terms of design and production.

**4. How has fiberglass changed automotive history?**

GH: As a material, fiberglass changed the very nature of automotive design. No longer would cars be designed and built by only those at the very top of the industry having the tools to shape metal appropriately. Talented and hardworking individuals could create a mold of their dream car in plaster and create a fiberglass body. On average it took about 2,000 more hours to finish a car (50 weeks of 40 hour work weeks) so this was not for the faint of heart. That is one contributing factor as to why these cars are so rare today.

**5. How did you become involved in fiberglass vehicles?**

GH: I was schooled in automotive history, design and appreciation by my mother (my dad was not a car guy), my grandfather and my mentor, Paul Terhorst. My first car was a 1955 Cadillac Fleetwood and that was followed by the purchase of my first fiberglass car in 1980 - when I was 18 years old – called “The Shark.” I still have this car today.

**6. Why was it important to honor fiberglass as a Feature at The Milwaukee Masterpiece?**

GH: The best car story never told is the story of building your own sports car in the 1950’s. Only a few could afford the Ferraris and Porsches of the day – and these cars were pretty rare back then. If you wanted your own sports car your only option was often to build it yourself. Think about the guts, drive and determination needed to design the car of your dreams – and then build it. This was a multiyear project for most; much different than going to the dealer, signing and driving your new car away. There is no car story more intimate than showcasing the building of your own dream and this is what happened with each and every fiberglass car built back in the 1950’s.



**7. What vehicles are in your current collections?**

GH: If I listed all my cars out, my friends would make fun of me and my family would no longer talk to me. But...a few are: 1946 Kurtis Omohundro Comet – the first sports car built in postwar America. The Cheetah Transporter – the most famous race car hauler built in America, later owned by Dean Moon. The 1937 Gougeon Streamliner – one of 4 known concept cars that predate the first Manufacturer built concept car (Buick Y job) by a year or more. The Chicagoan Sports Car – show car built for the 1954 Chicago Auto Show. The LeMans Coupe – missing for nearly 50 years, designed by famed stylist Strother Macminn. I also have the largest collection of unrestored vintage American sports cars outside of any junkyard in America.

DA: I have 54 vehicles at this time... too many to list!

**8. Where did your love for automobiles come from?**

GH: From my mother. In the 1950's, when she was going to college, she found and began restoration of a 1948 Hudson Brougham convertible. From my grandfather who sold new Chevrolets for nearly 50 years (and who found my first car, a 1955 Cadillac Fleetwood, for me). From my mentor Paul Terhorst who schooled me in the 1970's in restoration and collectability of 1930's thru 1960's cars.

DA: Always had a love for automobiles – A year before he had his driver's license he had bought a 1950 Mercury. Before he graduated from high school bought a new Chrysler off the show room floor. Great dating cars.

**9. How did you become involved with The Milwaukee Masterpiece?**

GH: My Co-Chair DeWayne Ashmead, a gentleman and a scholar, tracked me down at the Amelia Island Concours d' Elegance and we began our discussions of showcasing an event that would bring national prominence to the forgotten fiberglass cars of the 1950's and 1960's.

DA: One year the Kissel was the featured marque. Dale Anderson from the Wisconsin Automotive Museum convinced me to attend and bring my 1925 Kissel. I did and it won best of show.

**10. Are there any well-known fiberglass vehicles that our guests can expect to see at the event?**

GH: Well....what's the word? Oxymoron? A figure of speech that combines contradictory terms... By the very nature of having a "Forgotten Fiberglass" class we can't have any famous cars – right? But within that class, the Bosley Mark II is a standout; one that was recognized at the time as being in a class by itself in terms of design and build. Each of the cars in the "forgotten" class represents excellence in terms of design and achievement in every way. The owners of these cars can rightfully state that their car is significant in every way to this genre and to the history of American Sports cars in the postwar era.

**11. Are there any well-known fiberglass vehicles that our guests would be familiar with?**

GH: On the "Famous Fiberglass" side, we have the Bricklin, Avanti, and the Corvette. Who can get more "famous" in terms of "fiberglass" than that!