

Louis Chenot

“Metalworking Craftsman of the Decade”

BY CRAIG LIBUSE

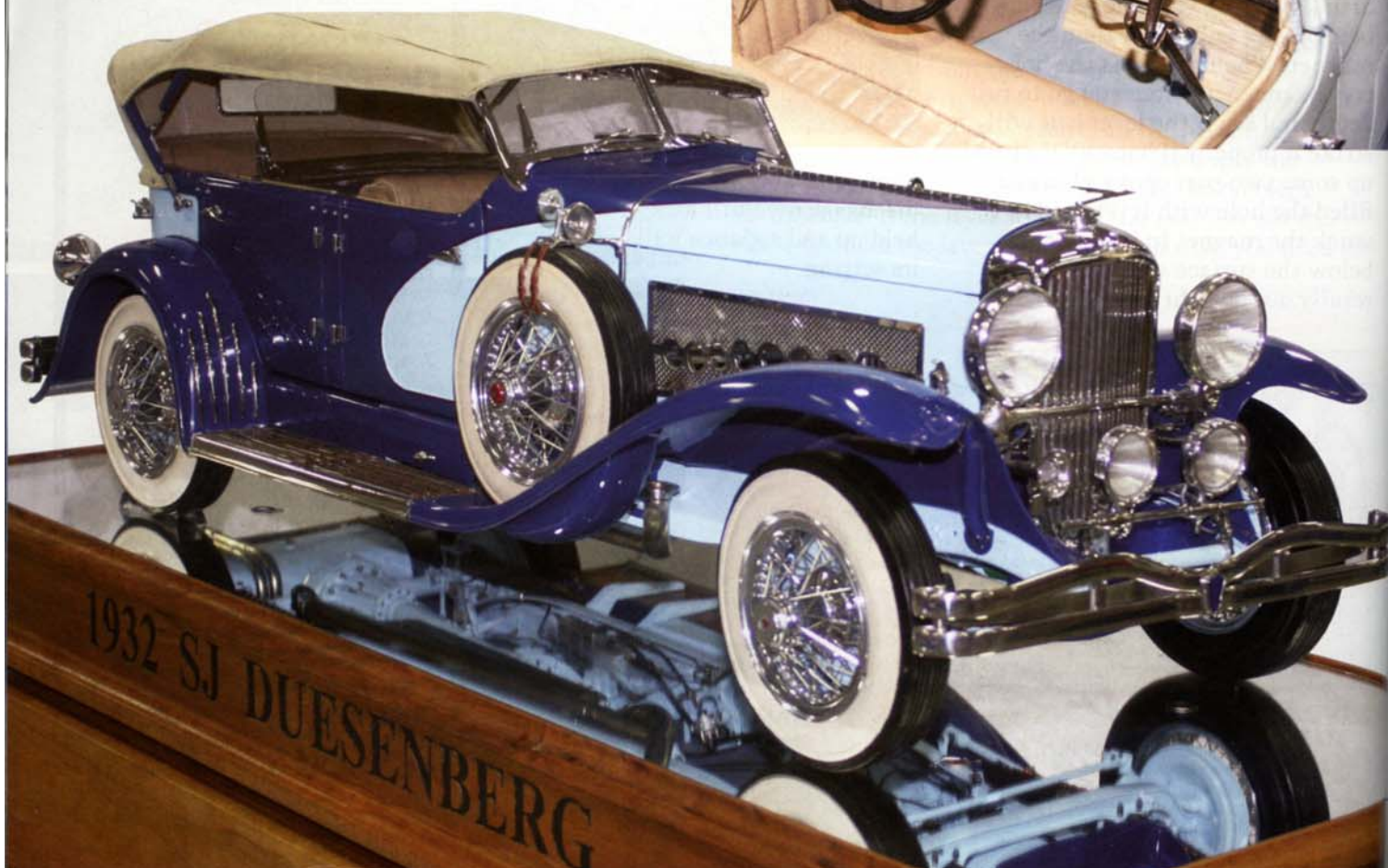
Each year the Joe Martin Foundation for Exceptional Craftsmanship gives its top award of \$2000 to a craftsman who has exhibited excellence in craftsmanship through a lifetime body of work. The foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to preserving and rewarding excellence in craftsmanship at the small end of the size scale and is funded through profits from Mr. Martin's machine tool company and private donations.

This year's winner, the fifteenth to receive the award, is Louis Chenot of Carl Junction, Missouri. Lou is being recognized for the quality of his model engineering projects over the years, but particularly for his 1932 Duesenberg in 1/6 scale. This 10-year project simply has no equal in the world of miniature autos. The running, straight-eight engine has the prototypical 4 valve per cylinder arrangement and the transmission and driveline are also functional. The bodywork and interior are also faithfully duplicated in miniature to



the highest standards imaginable. To recognize Lou's special achievement, this year's award is being called the “Craftsman of the Decade” award rather than “Craftsman of the Year.”

Lou spent his 40-year working career as a mechanical engineer, with the last ten years as Director of Engineering for Leggett & Platt Corporation Automotive Group. He has restored full-size vintage cars, including a 1930 Cadillac Convertible in the 1960s that was shown on the classic



car circuit. He has been a modeler since age five, leading up to steam powered models and a beautiful 1895 American LaFrance fire pumper that involved about 4000 to 5000 hours of work over a 25-year period, finally being finished in Lou's first year of retirement. He also built a 1/6 scale Bentley rotary aircraft engine. His current project is to build a vintage mahogany speedboat powered by a model of the Liberty V-12 aircraft engine.

Lou's Duesenberg can be seen on display at the Joe Martin Foundation booth at the North American Model Engineering Society Expo in Southgate, MI. The award and check will be officially presented to Lou at the booth on Saturday, April 30 2011 at the Expo. More on Lou and his work can be seen on the foundation's museum website at www.CraftsmanshipMuseum.com/Chenot.htm.

For more information, contact Craig Libuse, Director, Joe Martin Foundation for Exceptional Craftsmanship. Phone: (760) 727-9492, or email: craig@craftsmanshipmuseum.com.

Photos by Author

*The Home Shop
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