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CARCHITECTURE USA

AMERICAN HOUSES WITH HORSEPOWER

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Lannoo

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**“The design of cars
and buildings can
shape our cities and
impact our daily lives.
They have the power
to transform the way
we navigate
and experience
our environment.”**

Jean Nouvel, architect



ICONIC HOUSES



1959

Rolls-Royce Silver Cloud II Drophead Coupé

ARCHITECTURE In February 2016 the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) was gifted a textbook example of architecture. James Goldstein not only donated to the museum his legendary Sheats–Goldstein Residence (1963) by American architect John Lautner, he also gave it his 1961 Rolls-Royce Silver Cloud II Drophead Coupé. The donation marked the start of an ‘architecture collection’ at LACMA. Originally built for Helen and Paul Sheats, the iconic home was purchased by Goldstein in 1972, barely ten years after its construction, despite its dilapidated state. Together with the architect, he continued to work on the house until his death in 1994.

Lautner (1911–1994), while not as fervent a car enthusiast as his mentor Frank Lloyd Wright, shared with him a love for projects which allowed them the latitude to conceive every last detail, right down to the carpets and furniture. This can clearly be seen in the Sheats–Goldstein Residence, which gained iconic status, not only for its underlying architectural concept—a house under a triangular canopy of concrete—but also due to its appearances in an array of mainstream films, music videos and TV series, including *The Big Lebowski*, *Charlie’s Angels* and *Snowfall*.

CAR Built from 1955 to 1966, the Silver Cloud is for many the most beautiful Rolls-Royce ever designed. It was the ultimate luxury car, one that was very much at home in Hollywood—Brigitte Bardot, among others, had one—and, in the spirit of the brand at the time, this Rolls-Royce was also known for its reliability. In 1959 the inline 6-cylinder engine was replaced by an aluminium V8 inspired by Buick’s, which would be improved until the 1990s. The second series we see here was very successful in the US. “At 60 miles an hour the loudest noise in this new Rolls-Royce comes from the electric clock,” went the legendary slogan. The fact that Rolls-Royce always built noiseless engines makes the switch to electric power today more logical than for brands that always took pride in their distinctive sound. The convertible versions of the Silver Cloud were built at H.J. Mulliner & Co., which was acquired by Rolls-Royce in 1959.





1997

Porsche 996

ARCHITECTURE In 2015, the Petersen Automotive Museum in California underwent a substantial facelift. Rather than demolishing the unremarkable existing structure, Kohn Pedersen Fox Associates (KPF) decided to envelop the former department store in a striking ‘gift wrap.’ This transformation featured elegant stainless steel ‘ribbons’ that dynamically draped around the once sterile tower block. The project required a staggering 100 tons of steel and 140,000 screws.

Inspired by the automotive world, the stainless-steel wrapping bears a striking resemblance to an abstract racing circuit. The design concept aimed “to express constant motion, suggesting speed, aerodynamics and the movement of air,” as explained by KPF’s Eugene Kohn. Visitors to the Petersen Automotive Museum are greeted with an equally ambitious interior. The museum offers an immersive experience, allowing visitors to explore the rich history of automobiles, racing and film. The collection includes iconic cars such as Elvis Presley’s De Tomaso Pantera, and a Jaguar XKSS owned by Steve McQueen.

CAR Few car aficionados were happy when Porsche introduced the 996 in 1997, so different from the classic 911 with its air-cooled boxer engine and thrilling sound that had made the car an icon since 1964. Its front-end design and dashboard layout, plucked straight from the much cheaper Boxster, were thorns in their side. Yet despite the often-heard critique, the 996 became a commercial success, selling 175,000 units. Today, the car can be purchased relatively cheaply, and opinions are quietly evolving, with some now considering it a genuine 911 and good value for money.







Delorean DMC-12



ARCHITECTURE It's highly unlikely that you would pass by this Royal Residence by William / Kaven Architecture without being captivated. The prestigious glass and steel treehouse is situated along a winding road in Forest Park, Portland, renowned as the largest public park in any US city. Its location is unparalleled, allowing residents to immerse themselves in nature, with the famous Wildwood Trail practically at their doorstep. The exterior architecture of the Royal Residence has been meticulously designed to blend harmoniously with its surroundings, maintaining a discreet presence amidst the trees. Once inside, the landscape takes center stage, with the residence thoughtfully oriented towards the surrounding wilderness. The international design is exemplified by the expansive glass front and the generous use of oak and walnut in the interior customization. The Royal Residence is part of a larger development project by William / Kaven Architecture and Kaven + Co, and is one of nine plots, conveniently a stone's throw away from downtown Portland.

CAR The brilliant engineer John DeLorean, known for his flamboyant and controversial lifestyle, had achieved success at Pontiac of GM before establishing his own DeLorean Motor Company. Manufactured in Belfast in 1981 and 1982, the DMC-12 soared to fame as the time machine in the movie *Back to the Future*. Originally designed by Giorgeto Giugiaro, the car's flat, angular aesthetic was further elaborated by Lotus founder Colin Chapman. However, unlike a Lotus, the DeLorean DMC-12 was characterized by its heavy weight and lack of agility. Despite popular misconceptions, the bodywork of the DMC-12 was not aluminum: its inner structure was made of composite materials while the exterior was constructed of sandblasted stainless steel, left unpolished.

1967

Volkswagen T2

ARCHITECTURE For Caleb Johnson, building with wood is as instinctive as manufacturing a car in steel. The Portland-based architect and founder of the Woodhull firm was commissioned by a Boston couple to design an energy-efficient home that would gracefully mature over time. The exterior of this contemporary barn in Maine is lined with cedar, while the interior is finished with hemlock and ash. This architectural gem is an example of a design that draws inspiration from classical aesthetics, yet possesses the qualities to withstand the test of time, much like the enduring appeal of a Volkswagen van.

CAR In 1947 Dutch Volkswagen importer Ben Pon laid the foundations for the VW van, internally known as T2 (the Beetle, on which it was based, was called T1). Production commenced in 1950, and there have been seven generations from T1 to T7. Until the arrival of the T4 in 1990, the engine was located in the rear, much like the Beetle. The model shown here is a T2, the first version with a panoramic windscreen without a central bar, and produced from 1967 to 1979, although production in Brazil continued until the end of 2013.



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