

## Lyon Air Museum Exhibit of Rarest Duesenberg Luxury Cars Extended Through August 7, 2011

*From the Collection of General William Lyon*

SANTA ANA, Calif., July 20, 2011—Lyon Air Museum, a premier Southern California showcase for vintage military aircraft and automobiles, has announced an extension through Sunday, August 7, of its current exhibit of ten quintessential Duesenberg automobiles from the collection of General William Lyon. The exhibit of some of the largest, most stylish and beautiful cars ever created is being held at the facility, located on the west side of the runway at John Wayne Airport in Orange County.

“The Museum has been experiencing above average attendance through the first week of our Duesenberg exhibit,” said Mark Foster, president of Lyon Air Museum. “As a result of the popularity of the Duesenberg automobiles, we’ve elected to extend the run of this exhibit through Sunday August 7th.”

The Duesenberg represents an innovative melding of American elegance, engineering and extravagance, according to Foster.

“General Lyon has preserved a great American legacy and with this exhibit he is enjoying sharing with visitors to his Museum the unique experience of seeing some of these grand automobiles up close,” Foster said.

Included in the cars on display are examples of the legendary Duesenberg Model J series, most notable for their fine design, rich colors, imposing grille, headlights, side-mounted spare tire, hood and fenders:

- **1929 Duesenberg Model J LeBaron Dual Cowl Phaeton**—With coachwork by LeBaron, this automobile, Chassis No. 2125, Engine No. J101, is the First Model J Duesenberg. An irreplaceable piece of American automotive history, it first served as a factory demonstrator car.
- **1929 Duesenberg Model J Murphy Dual Cowl Phaeton**—Coachwork by Walter M. Murphy Company. First owned by John J. McCarthy, the president of the Cracker Jack Company, this Duesenberg—finished in blue with dark blue fenders and brown leather interior—made its first public appearance in the 1930s when it transported the Grand Marshal in the Rose Parade. It was later owned by American collector William F. Harrah, who lent it to Columbia/Tristar for its role in the 1982 movie “Annie,” in which the 265hp Duesenberg “straight eight” was used to chase down the bad guys and save Annie.
- **1929 Duesenberg Model J LeBaron Phaeton**—Coachwork by LeBaron. This one-off phaeton with radically shaped doors and sculpted lowered door edges had numerous owners over the years, including Los Angeles Times publisher Otis Chandler, who purchased the vehicle in 1999.
- **1930 Duesenberg Model J Murphy Speedster**—Originally called a “disappearing top torpedo convertible coupe,” this classic won First in Place and Reserve Best in Show at the famed Pebble Beach Concours d’Elegance.
- **1931 Duesenberg Model J Weymann “Taper Tail” Speedster**—Originally owned by Walter Varney, a businessman and pilot from San Francisco who started commercial aviation as we know it. His fledgling air service later became United Airlines.
- **1931 Duesenberg SJ Murphy Convertible Coupe**—This “disappearing top” was originally built for Sid Smith, a cartoonist for the famous “Andy Gump” comic strip.
- **1931 Duesenberg Model J Fernandez and Darrin Convertible Victorian**—Originally owned by an Indian prince, this car later returned to Paris where it entered into a chain of new ownership.
- **1932 Duesenberg SJ Murphy Town Car**—Originally owned by Dolores del Rio, Latina bombshell actress and star of Hollywood films during the silent era and during the Golden Age of Hollywood. The Oscar-nominated del Rio, seeking a new car commensurate with her status, chose this one-of-a-kind Duesenberg with coachwork by Pasadena’s own coachbuilder-to-the-stars, Walter M. Murphy.
- **1934 Duesenberg Model J Walker-La Grande Convertible Coupe**—Coachwork by A.H. Walker Company. Originally sold new to Dr. Frederick Gruneck of Chicago, Ill. The founder of Northridge Hospital Medical Center in Southern California, Gruneck traded a Murphy-bodied Duesenberg convertible coupe for it.
- **1935 Duesenberg SJ Gurney Nutting Speedster**—Chassis No. 2614 is the highest serial number Duesenberg. The car was built for the Maharaja of Indore in London. It was supposed to be delivered to India, but after Japan invaded China, there was fear that the country might also invade India—so many wealthy Indians fled their homes. The Maharaja eventually took delivery of this car at his mansion in Santa Ana, Calif. The car disappeared and was considered lost until its rediscovery in 1959. Eventually, it was acquired by General Lyon.

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With its distinctive appearance and powerful engine, the Duesenberg automobile was the embodiment of luxury and lavish detail in the first half of the twentieth century. The cars were custom-built by E.L. Cord and Fred Duesenberg during an era when America's love affair with the automobile was in its infancy.

Duesenberg (often nicknamed "Duesy") was an Indianapolis, Indiana-based luxury automobile company most renowned for its high-quality passenger cars and record-breaking racing cars.

Duesenberg cars were considered some of the very best cars of the time, and were built entirely by hand. In 1914, Eddie Rickenbacker drove a "Duesy" to finish in 10th place at the Indianapolis 500, and a Duesenberg won the race in 1924, 1925 and 1927. The company ceased production in 1937, but during its lifetime Duesenberg passenger cars were proudly owned by some of the wealthiest and most famous people the world over.

It is estimated that 378 of the 481 originally manufactured Duesenbergs are still on the road today.

The 30,000-sq.ft. Lyon Air Museum opened in Dec. 2009. The facility represents the fulfillment of a dream of Major General William Lyon, USAF (Ret), who held the position of Chief of the U.S. Air Force Reserve from 1975 to 1979. Currently, General Lyon is Chairman of the Board and CEO of William Lyon Homes, Inc., Newport Beach, Calif. His passion for aviation history and youth education is the driving force behind Lyon Air Museum. In establishing the Museum, General Lyon sought to create a world-class facility that would be available to the local community and would offer educational exhibits designed to inspire young people. The Museum has on exhibit some of the world's rarest operational aircraft and vehicles.

Lyon Air Museum is located at 19300 Ike Jones Road, Santa Ana, CA 92707. P: 714/210-4585. F: 714/210-4588. Email: [info@lyonairmuseum.org](mailto:info@lyonairmuseum.org). Web: [www.lyonairmuseum.org](http://www.lyonairmuseum.org).

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