

Giant Collection Of Old Radiator Caps And Hood Ornaments

A lot of old cars and pickups made from about 1900 to the mid 1940's came equipped with radiator cap "mascots" and hood ornaments, many of them quite beautiful. Collecting the ornaments has become a hobby for some, including Mike Kleba of Mallorytown, Ontario.

Kleba buys, swaps, and sells ornaments.

"I have one of the biggest collections in North America and am always looking for more," says Kleba, who has about 500 ornaments. "I used to work in the electro plating business refinishing old car parts, where I learned a lot about the designs of old cars. After I retired I started collecting the ornaments. I can restore mascots and ornaments so I'll take them whether they're in good or damaged condition.

"Mascots were made first, starting in about 1900. I think the most attractive mascots were made from 1910 to 1930. Hood ornaments didn't start showing up until the mid 1930's and are still made today, although they're much smaller than the older ones. In the 1960's and 1970's, car companies started spring-loading their hood ornaments for greater safety. I'm looking for mostly late 1920's to early 1930's mascots and hood ornaments. I'm particularly interested in mascots made from 1923 to 1926 because they're very rare.

"Both mascots and hood ornaments became a symbol of a car's identity and were often what encouraged people to buy a car.

"Two examples of beautiful mascots are those made for the 1927 to 1929 Cadillac LaSalle car. One shows a man playing a trumpet. The other shows a man who has just come to America, holding out his hat in celebration. The 1911 Rolls Royce came with a beautiful 'flying lady' mascot. In 1934 Cadillac came out with a 'flying lady' hood ornament. The Indian head radiator caps made for 1926 to 1929 Pontiac cars were also quite distinctive. Every year Pontiac came out with a different Indian head model. The 1935 Lincoln car hood ornament, showing a running greyhound dog, is also well known.

"Many mascots and ornaments are difficult to find today and are definitely becoming more valuable. In the past, Pontiac hood ornaments sold for \$6 or \$7 apiece. Today they sell for \$200 to \$300."



1934-35 Chevrolet pickup hood ornament.



1927 Peerless radiator cap mascot.



1920's Bentley radiator cap mascot.



American Trucks' ornament made in the 1920's.

For more information, contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Mike Kleba, P. O. Box 70, Mallorytown, Ontario, Canada KOE 1R0 (ph 613 923-5934).



Collecting radiator cap "mascots" and hood ornaments made for old cars and pickups has become more than a hobby for Mike Kleba of Mallorytown, Ontario, who has one of the biggest collections in North America.



1927 Buick radiator cap mascot (left) and 1923 French Accessories.



From left to right, 1928, 1926, and 1929 Pontiac radiator cap mascots.



1935 -36 Lincoln hood ornament.



1934-35 Cadillac 16-cylinder hood ornament.

Vacuum Repair Man Builds His Own High Performance Machines By Hand

For years, Mark O'Brien patiently listened to customers' complaints about the vacuum cleaners he sold and repaired.

His conclusion after every such conversation was that someone needed to come up with a better built, affordable, and reliable machine. "I'd sell a commercial cleaner a top-of-the-line canister vacuum and he'd be back here in six months with a worn-out machine," O'Brien says.

He learned while repairing vacuums that higher-quality vacuum components are available to stand up to heavier use, so he continued to look for a company that would put them all together in one machine.

Finally he gave up the search for the perfect machine and put one together himself. "I built the first one at my kitchen table with a drill and a screwdriver," says the St. Johnsbury, Vermont shop owner.

He intended to build several machines to see how they worked and whether his

customers were interested. But when he showed his prototype machine to a couple of customers who ran commercial cleaning businesses, they wanted to buy one immediately. He says before he could really think about it, he was in the vacuum cleaner manufacturing business. "We sold the second one we made and we've been selling them ever since," he says.

He needed a name for his vacuum cleaner and after seeing some F-16 fighter jets fly overhead, he and wife, Janet, hit on the name Defender F-16.

O'Brien starts with an 18-in. section of 6-in. diameter SDR-type PVC pipe. In one end, he mounts a vacuum motor made by an Ohio company. On the other end, he attaches fittings and mountings for a standard 1 1/4-in. vacuum cleaner hose.

One of the keys to O'Brien's vacuum cleaner is the air filtration system. "In most vacuum cleaners, a lot of dust goes through



O'Brien uses "best available" components to build his high performance vacuums.

the motor. I designed mine with a filter in front of the motor to take out virtually all the dust before the air gets to the motor," he says.

O'Brien makes three versions of his machine. The first sells for \$379 (plus shipping) with normal vacuum nozzles. A commercial model with a powered head sells for \$525. "It's got the best vacuum nozzle I know of - the motor for the head itself is more powerful than the motor on some commercial vacuums," says O'Brien.

A third model, with a less powerful power nozzle, sells for \$429.

Although O'Brien has sold hundreds of vacuums, he still makes them by hand. He gets two or three orders a day by word of mouth.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Mark O'Brien, Defender F-16, North Country Vac & Sew, 442 Portland St., St. Johnsbury, Vermont 05819 (ph 802 748-9190).