

After 20 years, private classic car museum open to public

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SOUTH FLORIDA SUN SENTINEL

SUNRISE – Dear car lovers, turn on your engines.

A candy land of vintage American vehicles – kept all but secret since 2001 – welcomes your arrival.

The family-owned Dauer Museum of Classic Cars on the western edge of Sunrise quietly opened to the public last year just before the shutdown.

“We wanted to share it with other people. What better than to show it and learn about the nation’s history,” said Joanne Dauer, a registered nurse and lecturer at the University of Miami School of Nursing and Health Studies who owns and helps curate the museum along with her husband, Dr. Edward Dauer.

The Dauers, of Coral Springs, own the 30,000 square foot industrial building west of Hiatus Road along with their adult children. The museum is home to 70 vehicles, most of which are fully restored classic cars in impeccable condition.

“Every car in the collection is a top quality restoration – 100 percent authentic. The color available that year, the accessories. There is no AC if it wasn’t factory made that way,” said Edward Dauer, a clinical professor of biomedical engi-

neering, radiology and family medicine at UM.

A trio the Dauers call the triple crown includes a 1953 Cadillac Eldorado (the first year the car was made), a 1953 original Buick Skylark and a 1953 Oldsmobile Fiesta – only 458 were ever made.

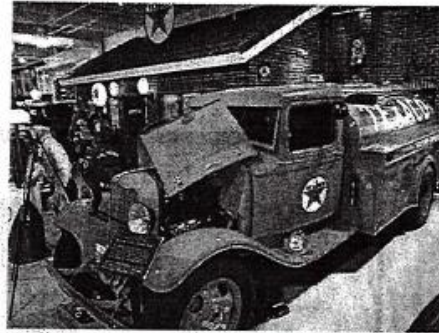
The most expensive Cadillac produced in 1956 is also on display. The Cadillac Imperial Limousine holds nine passengers and has its original Arlington green exterior with an optional gold grille. It’s the only fully restored example known to exist, according to the Dauers.

And the oldest Cadillac in the bunch is a 1906 delivery truck with kerosene headlights. The antique was powered by a single-cylinder engine producing 10 horsepower and was used to deliver flowers around Pittsburgh.

Each vehicle, in all its details, has a story.

And for the Dauers, that was the inspiration behind opening the museum’s doors.

The museum was previously invitation-only, and hosted numerous fundraisers and charitable events since 2001. They say throughout the years they’ve raised millions of dollars for the Boys and Girls Clubs of Broward County. They’ve also hosted other organizations including the American Heart Association and



A 1934 Ford Gasoline Tanker Truck is on display at Dauer Museum of Classic Cars in Sunrise. CARLINE JEAN/
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Nova Southeastern University.

The family still welcomes fundraisers and private events at the museum, but say the decision to go public is not financial.

“We are into history. We put together the history of the United States. It’s not only the cars, it’s the way people lived,” said Edward Dauer.

“Especially the younger generation. They learn it if they see it and are more visual learners,” said Joanne Dauer.

Restoring classic cars is a longtime passion for the couple, who share a love of history and medicine.

Edward Dauer wears many hats at the University of Miami. But the science and engineering-minded car lover says everything he does, even his work in medicine, is a hobby.

“As a little kid, I could tell you the difference between a ’56, ’57 and a ’58 Cadillac,” he said.

Joanne Dauer remembers their first ride together. “He picked me up in a 1941 four-door Cadillac sedan. There were two hub caps missing. When I sat down wires came through the seat where I was sitting and I was thinking, what am I doing in this car?”

Dauer said made his first classic car purchase in 1971 and it was apparently the spark, not just for their relationship, but dozens of future car restorations together.

You can see their life’s work along with other memorabilia that have defined aspects of America’s history including some of the country’s first color television cameras, street lights and pay phones at the family’s museum.

The Dauer Museum of Classic Cars is located at 10801 NW 50th St., Sunrise. Doors open Monday through Friday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Nights and weekends are by appointment. Call 954-739-0978. Admission is \$12.50. Military and first responders are admitted free.