



A perhaps trivial essay about
all sort of issues a propos

CARS  **CARS**  **CARS**

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Bernd Rohrmann

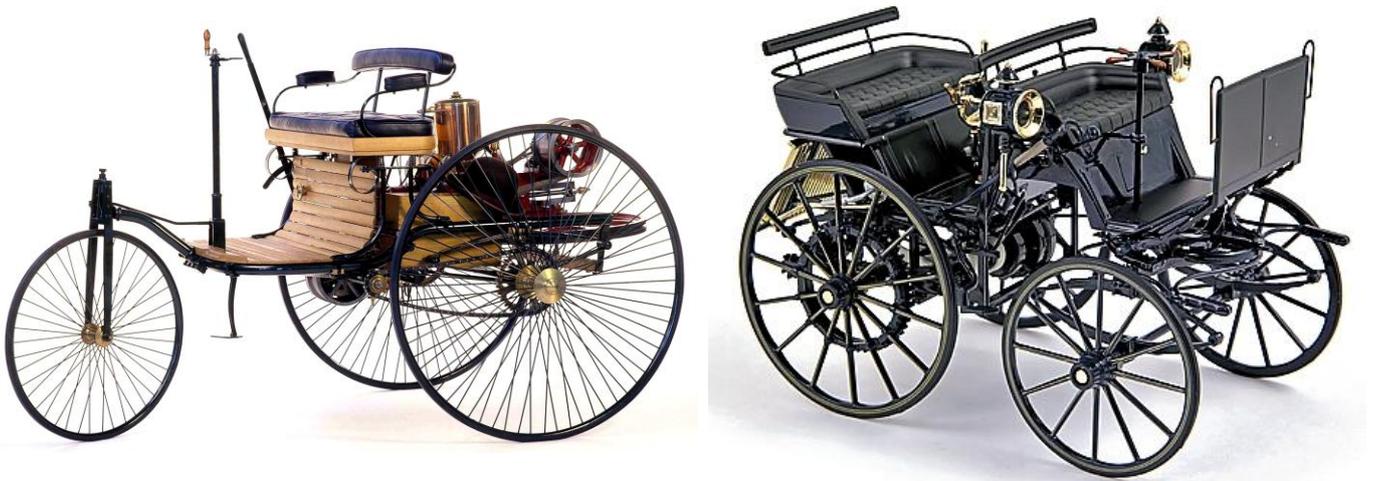


The invention of the automobile

It happened 1886 ...In Mannheim the engineer Carl Benz built the "Benz Patent Motorwagen", and this is usually rated as the crucial invention. Later in the same year Gottlieb Daimler (Stuttgart) presented his automobile.

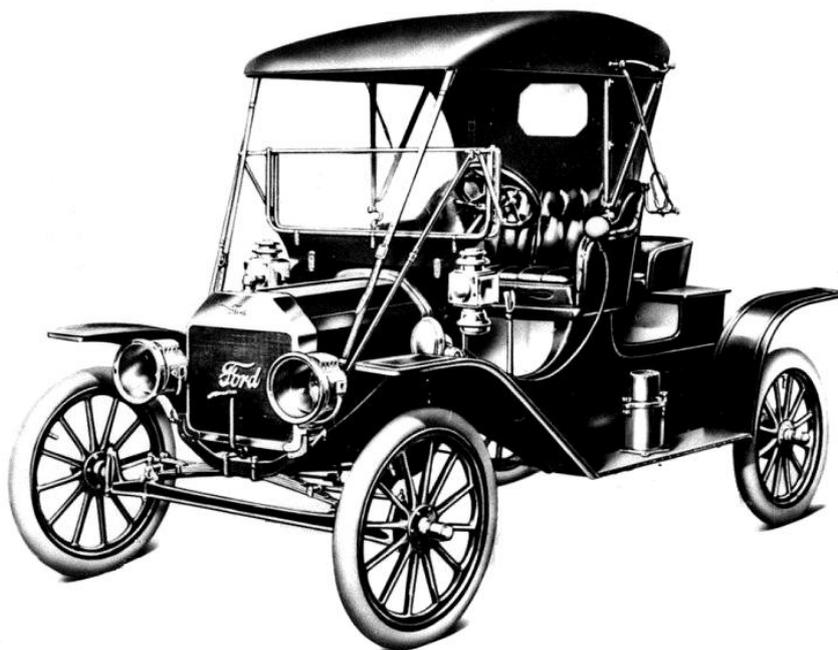
In 1888 the first long-distance car trip was done, about 10 km, by Benz' wife, Ms Bertha Benz.

The companies founded by Benz and by Daimler eventually merged, and that was the begin of the "Daimler-Benz" company, later renamed as Mercedes.



Both in Europe - especially Germany and France - and in USA soon factories producing cars were established.

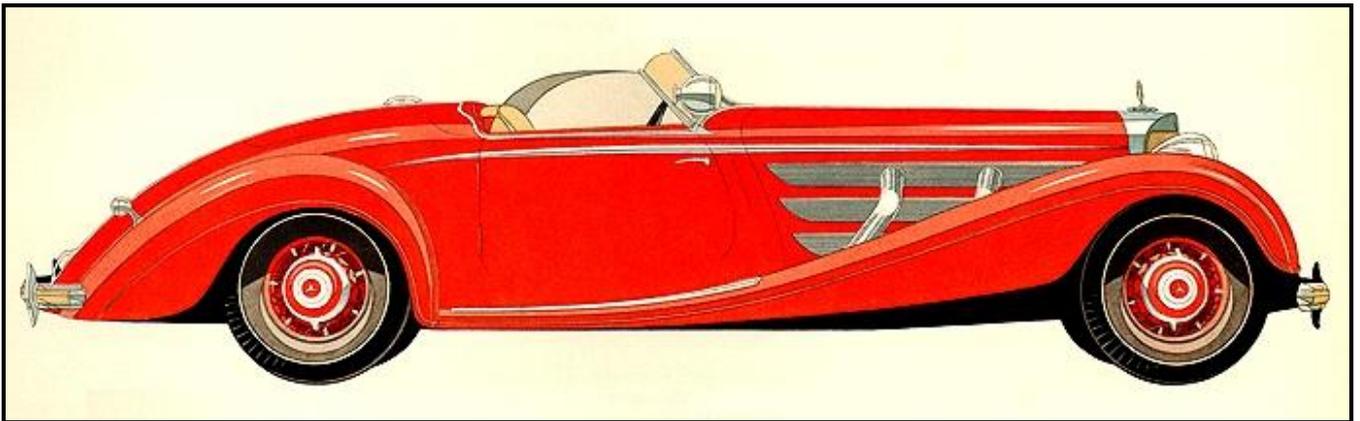
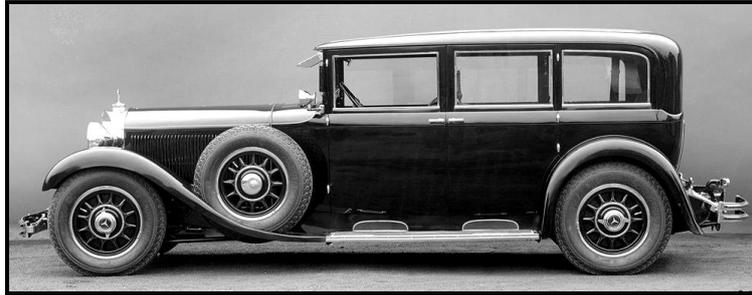
In 1903 Henry Ford founded the Ford Company. In 1908 Model T was created (nickname Tin Lizzie), and this was built millions of times until 1927



In his factory mass production was realized, which changed the production of cars forever.

Cars by Daimler-Benz ~ Mercedes - a selection of historic models

The Daimler-Benz company resulted from the merger of Karl Benz's and Gottlieb Daimler's companies in 1926. The name "Mercedes" was first used in 1901, and became the standard name around 1920.



Mercedes is not the largest car producer in the world, but it has been far the longest history, and is usually perceived as the most essential company.

The French car company Citroen

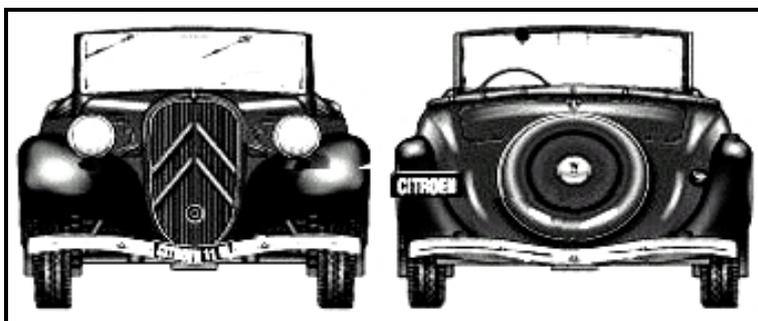
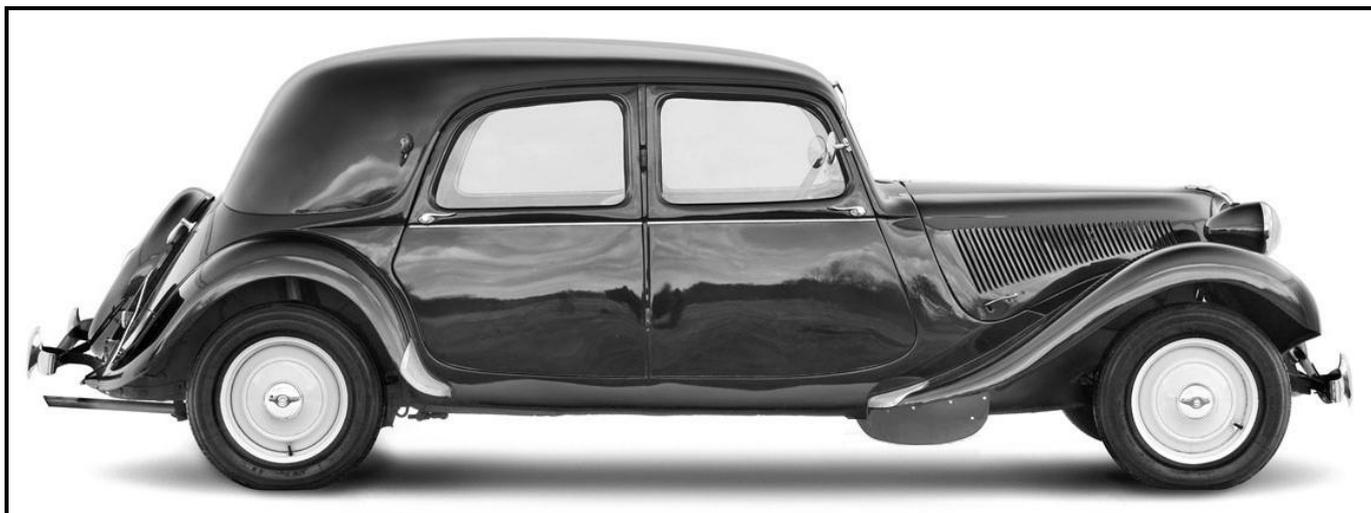
Citroen was founded in 1919 and was the first mass-production car company in Europe. All its early cars were designed to be practical and suit a wide group of people.

By the way, in 1925 one of these cars drove around whole Australia!



Soon larger cars were developed. These were also widely used as taxis, especially in the Paris city.

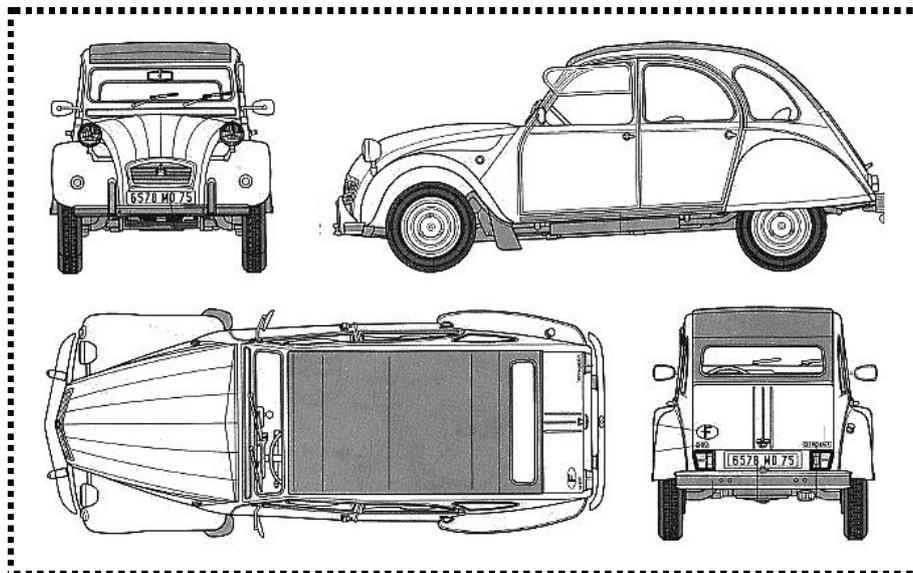
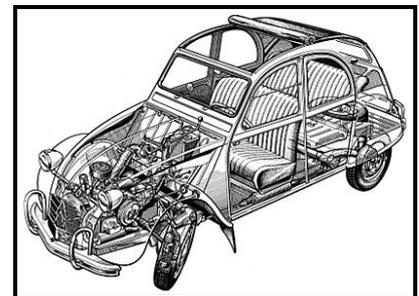
In 1934 a new Citroen car, the "Traction Avant", entered the street. It had three new attributes: Front-wheel drive, one-piece body, and independent suspension for the wheels. This Citroen pretty soon became dominant in France, and was built until 1957.



The Traction Avant was often featured in films, being the car of any kind of social group, from high society to gangsters ...

TWO OUTSTANDING CITROEN CARS -- <1> THE 2CV

The Citroën "2CV" (French: "deux chevaux" i.e. "deux chevaux vapeur", literally "two tax horse power") was an economy car produced from 1948 to 1990.



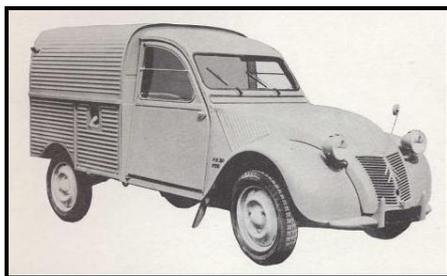
The 2CV was a full-size car for four people, plus moderate space for luggage. The tiny air-cooled two-cylinder engine provided 12 PS ~ 9 kW.



In 2007, the English designer Andy Saunders created an absurd 2CV, inspired by a famous painting by Pablo Picasso.



1951 Citroën added a van to the 2CV program, called the Fourgonnette, which was widely used as well.



Nicknames of the 2CV: In Europe, dozens of nicknames came up - especially in countries where the French "deux chevaux" is just too difficult to say. The Dutch were the first to call it "het lelijke eendje" ("the ugly duckling") or just "Eend" ("duck"). In German-speaking countries (Germany, Austria, Switzerland, partly Luxembourg), it was always called "Ente" ("duck"), possibly induced by the amazing behavior of the 2CV in curvy roads.

The 2CV is certainly considered Citroën's most iconic car.

MY PERSONAL & SUBJECTIVE VIEWPOINT:

The 2CV was technologically advanced and very innovative, yet also with uncompromisingly utilitarian unconventional looks, and deceptively simple Bauhaus inspired bodywork, that belied the sheer quality of its underlying engineering.

Some citations: "... extraordinary ingenuity of this design, which is undoubtedly the most original since the Model T Ford"; "the most intelligent application of minimalism ever to succeed as a car."

It was designed for low cost, simplicity of use, versatility, reliability, and off-road driving. For this it had a light easily serviceable engine, extremely soft long travel suspension (with adjustable ride height), high ground clearance, and for oversized loads a car-wide canvas sunroof.

Until 1990, more than 5 million 2CV cars were produced

I owned two 2 CV's. For me, none of all my other cars could match the extraordinary combination of uniqueness and ingenuity of this one!

TWO OUTSTANDING CITROEN CARS -- <2> THE DS

The other exceptional Citroen car was named "DS". This is pronounced in French as "Déesse", which means goddess ...It was presented in 1955.

The DS had many innovative features which made it outstanding: Aerodynamic design, hydropneumatic self-levelling suspension system, disc brakes, power steering and more. Thereby the DS set new standards in handling and drive quality - and it was seen as one of the "Cars of the Century".



There were two dilemmas though: The car lacked full reliability (because of Citroen's permant budget trouble), and the engine was rated as not strong enough (this was caused by the French car taxation system). The DS was nevertheless produced for 20 years, until 1975 -- yet this was the year that Citroen went bankrupt and finally Peugeot took over.

The current Citroen cars are not really impressive anymore - Citroen is nowadays just a subdivision of Peugeot. The last two models of distinctive design are the XP (following the Citroen DS, 1989-2000) and the C2 (following the Citroen Saxo; 2002-2009).

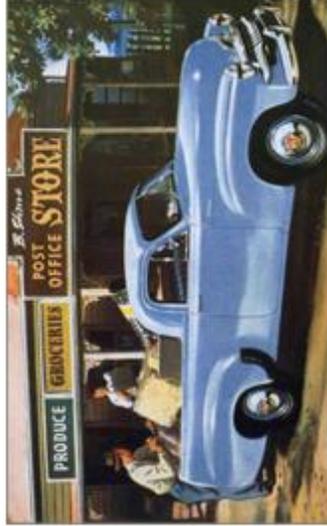


Holden cars in Australia - early ones



.....Holden.....cars designed and build in Australia since 1948.....early examples.....



>>> Holden is owned by General Motors (GM), and it will be shut down in 2017 <<<

Cars in Germany - a challenging 're-birth' after worldwar 2

At the end of worldwar 2, and the Nazi regime, Germany was very much destroyed, including most of the car factories, and poverty ruled. Consequently, small and low-cost (quasi-)cars were designed. The most popular one was the tiny Isetta "micro car", created in Italy and since 1955 made by BMW (!). Things changed when the VW "Volkswagen" (people's car), designed 1938, finally was produced fully.



The VW was produced until 2003, and 22 million cars were sold. It was fundamental for Germany's effort to get "back to life".

Some famous very distinctive cars: *Bugatti, Porsche, Jaguar, Ferrari, Talbot*



American cars in the fifties -- big, pompous, vulgar...



Contemporary 'modern' cars - their primary attributes

Well, somehow they look all the same ... Why? Because very few stylistic features are employed by about every car-making company, be it in China or France or Germany or India or Italy or Japan or Korea ... That these countries have such a different history in technology and in aesthetics seems not to matter anymore ...

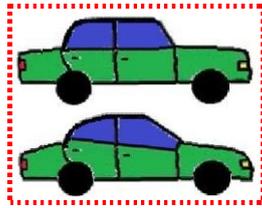
There are two primary attributes, the **shape given to cars**, and their **equipment with computers**.



The completely dominating style is quite obvious: The middle line below the windows goes up from front to back, and the roof goes down - plain straight horizontal lines, standard for about 100 years, are quasi forbidden. It appears that car designs are nowadays simply fashion, and have nothing to do with classical criteria, such as clarity or functionality.

Even vans or transporters increasingly change their shape, away from a conventional 'rectangular' form.



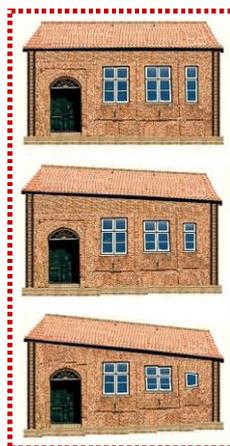


With the widely used station wagon cars (wagon, van, Kombi) the same has happened over the last decade. They are meant to be a compact transporter - yet the stylistic changes realized by basically every company means that the loading space has become smaller.



That they all got a bigger engine and look 'modern' may provide a status gain - yet the temporary shape is not in line with the original purpose of this type of cars.

Just for fun, imagine that residential houses would be re-defined that way, would people be happy there?



The second essential feature of modern cars is their **equipment with computers**. In early times, there was just a speedometer, and perhaps a radio, as in this Volkswagen. Then instruments abounded.



And now about every car has computer systems in-built. Their functions include entertainment, climate, navigation, engine control and safety issues.



Some of these "carputers" are so complex that, it seems, a PhD in Computer Science may be needed !!

A very un-modern yet truly classical & beautiful car - in my view

Soon after the war, from 1952 to 1964, the company BMW (Germany) built the 501 & 502 car, a unique 'upper class' model. It eventually got a 3.2 l V8 engine of 160 PS, it moved very smoothly yet could also go fast.



This car was praised as trustworthy, reliable, comfortable, attractive and striking. Yet producing it over-demanded BMW. Ironically their highly successful mini-car Isetta helped very much to survive ...

Finally, my first car, in 1961 - a Topolino!

The primary Fiat 500, commonly known as Topolino ("little mouse"), was created in 1936 and produced until 1955. It was one of the smallest, and cutest, cars in the world at that time, designed as two-seater.



The Topolino was equipped with a small 560 cc four-cylinder, water-cooled engine -- which sounded like a high-class sewing machine ... Nevertheless, it was a full-scale car, and quite funny to drive!



