

# BUGSBY

“Gold Bug”



1924 Kissel  
Model 6-55 Speedster

Lynn and Jeanne Kissel  
Cameron Park, California

## **The Kissel Motor Car Company Hartford, Wisconsin, 1906-1930**

Founded by Louis Kissel and sons William and George, the vehicles produced by Kissel are now unknown to most Americans. Over a period of 25 years, Kissel hand produced about 26,000 cars, trucks, ambulances, hearses and taxis. Although production numbers were low, Kissel was a highly respected producer of well built, beautifully styled cars. Kissel stopped production in 1930 due to the Great Depression and loss of market share to less expensive, mass produced vehicles. Fewer than 150 complete Kissel vehicles exist in the world today.

The most famous Kissel model is undoubtedly the Speedster, a sporty roadster featuring "racer cut" sides and a bumble-bee or turtle-back rear deck. This design was the concept of Conover T. Silver, a New York City distributor for Kissel, and Kissel designer J. Frederick Werner. In 1918 the company introduced the Kissel Silver Special, which was received with great enthusiasm at auto trade shows. By 1920 this body style was simply called the Kissel Speedster.

W. W. "Brownie" Rowland was an automotive writer for the Milwaukee Journal. As a promotion Brownie drove a chrome-yellow Kissel Speedster around Wisconsin for a month, calling attention for the need to improve the poor roads and inviting his readers to name the car he used. A young girl allegedly coined the name "Gold Bug" referring to the car's color and shape.

Popular with movie stars and other celebrities, Speedsters had fittings to strap a golf bag to each rear fender. A total number of about 3000 Kissel Speedsters were produced over 12, but only about 30-something are known to exist today.

The Kissel Model 6-55 is designated as a Full Classic™ by the Classic Car Club of America. These very special cars are "distinguished by their respective fine design, high engineering standards and superior workmanship."

## A Brief History of BUGSBY

**1924** – Manufactured in Hartford, Wisconsin for export to Australia. Transported by rail to New York, by steamship via the Panama Canal to Brisbane, by coastal freighter to Bryne Motor Company, Rockhampton, QLD. Sold to Fred Shuffener, owner of a saw mill and joinery in Rockhampton. First of twelve Kissels exported to Australia. (Original colors: chrome-yellow body, black fenders, green wheels and green leather interior)

**c1940** – Rear deck is chopped to form a “ute” (utility vehicle) while still owned by Fred Shuffener.

**1962** – Rescued by Bob Schutt from a farm in Jambin

(90 miles west of Rockhampton).

**1962** – Sold to Ed Ubergang, then sold to Ron Griffiths. Moved to Ipswich (west of Brisbane).

**1965** – Ron completes restoration using a 1940 Chevy roadster for missing rear deck. Refinishes body and fenders in the original colors, with a black interior.

**1966** – Sold to Frank Illich. Car moved to Sydney.

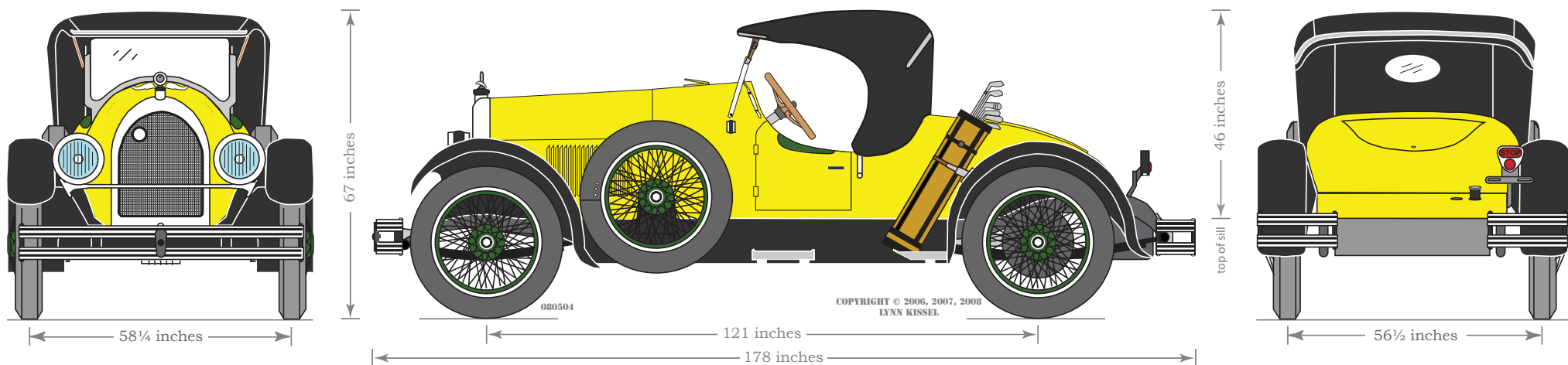
**1976** – Sold at auction to Wil (Bill) Trollope.

**1981** – Bill completes a mechanical overhaul of the drive train and refinishes body. (Colors: light-yellow body, white wheels, black fenders and interior)

**2005** – Sold to Lynn Kissel. Car moved to California.

**2006** – Approved to Full Classic™ status by Classic Car Club of America.

**2006-2010** – Lynn undertakes serious body-off freshening, returning car to original colors and configuration. *Kevin Schell, California Reflections*—rear deck and paint; *Dino Palermo, Fowlers Upholstery*—interior; *Joe Anino, Anino’s Upholstery*—fabric top; *Dan Nudelman, D&M Auto*—engine; *Johnson Plating Works*—plating; *Jerry Washburn*—waterpump; *Nile Godfrey, Classical Clocks and Antiques*—clock



### Specifications

Wheelbase ..... 121 in.  
 Weight ..... 3130 lb  
 Top speed..... 75 MPH  
 Fuel economy..... 17 MPG  
 Performance 0-60 MPH ..... 30 s  
 Power .....61 HP @ 2300 RPM  
 Engine type .....6 cyl, L-head  
 Bore × Stroke ..... 3 5/16" × 5 1/8"  
 Displacement ..... 265 cid (4.34 l)  
 Compression ..... 4.6:1

Clutch..... Borg & Beck DX-172  
 (two bearing, single 10" dry plate)  
 Transmission .. Warner 3sp (3.11, 1.69, 1.00, R-3.78)  
 Final drive ratio ..... 4.42:1  
 Oil / water capacity ..... 10 U.S. qt. / 19 U.S. qt.  
 Gas tank capacity ..... 18 U.S. gal.  
 Brakes .....2 wheel, mechanical  
 (4 wheel, hydraulics, opt'l in 1924; standand in 1925)  
 Steering ..... Ross cam and lever  
 (1½ turns lock-to-lock)

Turning radius ..... 40 ft.  
 Suspension.....Semi-elliptical leaf springs  
 Tires ..... 32x4 1/2 (23"), 31x5 (21"), 29x4 1/2 (20")  
 Sheet metal .....20 gauge body (0.0359")  
 18 gauge fenders (0.0478")  
 Cost when new .....\$2185 F.O.B Factory  
 Kissel 1924 production ..... 803 all vehicles  
 748 cars (about 155 Speedsters), 55 trucks  
 1924 Kissel vehicles remaining today ..... 6 cars  
 3 Speedsters, 2 Brougham Sedans, 1 Victoria Coupe

(Compare with a 1924 Ford Model T Runabout: Cost \$350; Weight 1540 lb; 1924 Ford production, all models 1,993,419)

## Famous “Gold Bug” Owners

Fatty Arbuckle (comedian), Bebe Daniels (actress), Ralph DePalma (racecar champion), Eddie Duchin (band leader), Amelia Earhart (aviator), Douglas Fairbanks (actor), Greta Garbo (actress), Gladys George (actress), Ruby Keeler (actress), William S. Hart (actor), Al Jolson (singer), Mabel Normand (actress), Mary Pickford (actress), Rudy Vallee (singer)



For more information on Bugsby, please visit our website

<http://www.starship.org>

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