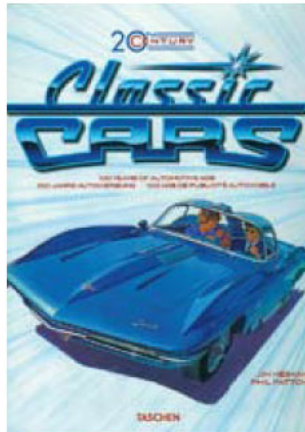


"20th. Century Classic Cars – 100 Years of Automotive Ads" by Jim Heimann & Phil Patton. Published by Taschen GmbH, Hohenzollernring 53, D-50672 Köln, Tel: +49-221-20 18 00, Fax: +49-221-25 49 19 contact@taschen.com. Hardcover, 9.4 x 11.9 ins., 480 pages. More than 400 colour illustrations. Multilingual Edition: English, French, German. ISBN: 978-3-8365-1463-7 £ 27.99 from most bookshops.

Taschen are well known for their art books, usually large, colourful and reasonably priced, but motoring has not featured strongly in their extensive catalogue and, in fact, '20th. Century Classic Cars' might appeal to readers with an interest in art as well as the motor car. The book is a visual history of the car in America through the medium of advertising and the main content of its 480 pages is a collection of beautifully reproduced, colour images of motoring adverts over the one hundred years from 1900. Since the adverts all come from the private collection of Jim Heimann the subjects tend to reflect his interests and so there is very little European content but that detracts little from the value of the book as a 'coffee table' browse.

To readers of this review the section covering 1900 – 1939 will probably be the most interesting and this fills over one hundred pages with both well known and long forgotten makes. Of course the more famous adverts are represented; there is 'Somewhere West of Laramie', combining the artwork of Fred Cole with rather winsome prose comparing the Playboy to 'a sassy pony', also there are slogans reflecting the age, Chevrolets 'It's so easy to drive' appealing to new and inexperienced drivers at a time when not everybody took driving for granted. Cadillac famously claimed that 'A man is known by his automobile' which may still hold true today but



not always to the credit of the owner, and Chrysler claimed that 'Yesterday's tiresome journey is just a refreshing jaunt' in their Airflow! Perhaps the most famous slogan, Packard's 'Ask a man who owns one', cleverly suggests a way to trust what the salesman claims and it survived almost as long as Packard itself because buyers did trust them until they became badge engineered Studebakers..

This book is all about the images and many of these are reproduced as a full page with some given a double spread. The quality of reproduction is very good on semi-gloss paper and the binding is commensurate with the size and weight of the book. This is not a book to read, in fact other than the adverts there is not a great deal of text, but it is a book to browse and, as such, there is much of interest to discover. The adverts reflect the age from which they originate and there is much to be learned about motoring as it was then: veteran cars had little or no weather protection and Chase Motor Car Robes show the driver and passenger 'Cozy and Happy' wrapped in a large, striped blanket with a fur lining, a product that would not have found much use in American cars after the 1920s. Many products are familiar like Klaxon, the Boyce MotoMeter and Zerolene Oils but others have disappeared into obscurity like the Mezger Automatic Windshield and Republic Staggard Tread Tires but all these products live on in their advertising at least.

Despite being outside our period the remainder of the book is equally fascinating and by the 50s the claims have become somewhat more exaggerated although Packard were still telling prospective buyers to 'Ask a man who owns one' while Pontiac owners were 'Driving the Biggest Thrill of the Trip' and Fords had the 'Liveliest Engines in Town'. Perhaps Packard felt themselves above all that but Cadillac certainly didn't although they harked back with 'Out of a Brilliant Past.....A Supreme Triumph!' and could always fall back on the might of General Motors when times were hard. In the 70s Jaguar also had the 'might' of British Leyland to fall back on and even their advertising was a bit lacklustre with the slogan 'Defy Comparison'!

Certainly a worthwhile book and exceptionally good value at the price of £27.99 when compared to other books of a similar size recently reviewed. Obviously the publishers are aiming for a wide audience and they deserve to succeed. Recommended.