

OLDS FAITHFUL

January 2008

The Quarterly Newsletter of
the Northern Lights Chapter
Oldsmobile Club

One of the top selling cars at RM's Hershey auction in October 2007 was almost a century old. It was a 1911 Oldsmobile Limited, one of three known to exist and the only one unrestored. Glen Woodcock of Autonet.ca saw this car last winter at RM's restoration shop in Blenheim, Ontario. Glen was told that the company felt it should be left in original condition and would be sold as is.

Even with its tattered tires, worn leather upholstery and a haze of surface rust on its coachwork, the Limited is an imposing automobile – more than 16 feet long, with a 138-in. wheelbase and massive 42 in. wheels. But it's the immensity of the engine block that is truly impressive.



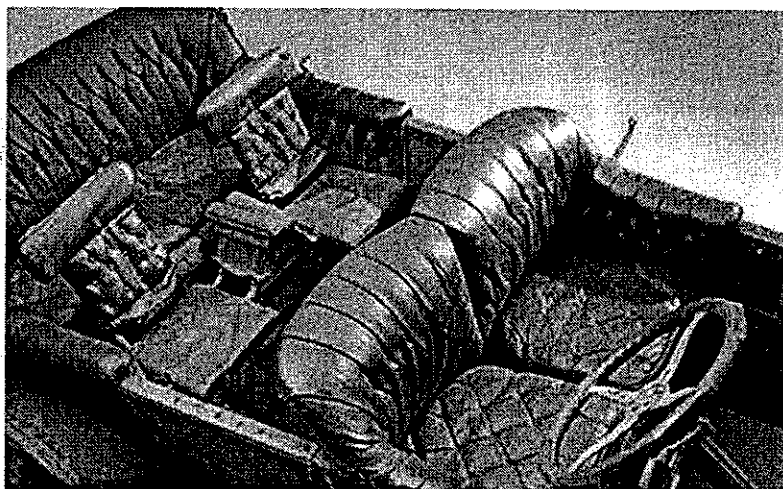
In trying to describe the size of the Limited's engine block, some feel like the proverbial fisherman describing the one that got away. Even that fisherman's arms couldn't stretch far enough to do it justice. For the record, it is a T-head inline six, cast in pairs, with a 5x6-in. bore and stroke. It displaces 707 Cu. in. (11.6 L) and Produces 60 hp. It is one of only 159 seven-passenger Limited touring cars built by Olds in 1911.

Originally purchased by the president of Pennsylvania's Brewyn-White Coal Company, it is one of

three known to survive and the only one never restored. It has spent the past 50 years in a museum. When no longer practical as a daily driver, it was stored in a barn until discovered by William Stewart in the 1950's. According to RM, he recognized its value as an artifact and resisted the temptation to commence restoration, instead preserving it in an extended time warp. At one point there was talk of restoring the car but it never came to fruition. Instead, this example became the car that every craftsman used as a measure from which to correctly restore a 1910 to 1912 Limited.

No one knows if the new owner will also be tempted to begin restoration, but I hope he too will resist and consider the Mercedes-Benz restoration shop motto in Stuttgart: "Original is Best".

As the 1911 Limited sits, it's the ultimate time machine and the most awe-inspiring automobile I have ever seen.



TIME MACHINE