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*University of* NOTRE DAME

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

***Three from the Thirties***

***Classic Cars from the Heartland***

Snite Museum of Art

University of Notre Dame

NOTRE DAME, IN—August 30 to November 20, 2016

The Snite Museum of Art will place on view three luxury automobiles manufactured in the Midwest during the Great Depression.

The three automobiles in this exhibition are Classic Car Club of America (CCCA) approved classics and two have won awards at juried, classic-car competitions. The 1938 Packard convertible coupe received a frame-off restoration by LaVine Restorations, Inc., Nappanee, Indiana, and took first place in its class in the prestigious August 2016, Pebble Beach Concours d’Elegance.

The CCCA defines classic cars as “fine or unusual motor cars which were built between and including the years 1915 to 1948. All of these are very special cars that are distinguished by their respective fine design, high engineering standards, and superior workmanship." Such automobiles were typically much more expensive than standard brands and were manufactured in small quantities.

Classic cars are judged against how they would have appeared when new. Criteria include 1) the use of original and/or authentic parts, or use of materials and technology available when the car was manufactured (for example, points are deducted for tinted glass, hose clamps not of the era, use of plastic insulated wiring, use of flexible exhaust pipe, radial tires, chrome plating of parts that would originally have been painted, etc.); 2) craftsmanship of the restoration; 3) presence of all original accessories (including cigarette lighter, functioning clock, functioning radio with all control knobs, etc.); 4) cleanliness and absence of fluid leaks; and 5) the auto’s ability to start, run smoothly, and operate safely—functioning brakes, horns, wipers, turn signals, headlamps, running lights, etc.

The three automobiles featured in the exhibition are:

1) **1934 Auburn 1250 V12 Salon Cabriolet**

391 cubic inch, 160 horsepower, V12 engine

three-speed transmission; two-speed axle

$1,495 base price in 1934

Known as the “James Cagney car,” this automobile was featured in the Warner Brothers movie entitled *The Mayor from Hell*, starring Cagney. The Salon was Auburn Automobile Company’s top-of-the-line model and it competed against other luxury brands of its day, including Packard.

**2) 1934 Packard 1107 Twelve Convertible Victoria**, with custom interior by Raymond Dietrich

446 cubic inch, 160 horsepower, V12 engine

three-speed transmission

$4,590 base price in 1934

This automobile has won awards at America’s three most prestigious classic automobile competitions: Pebble Beach Concours d’Elegance, St. Johns Concours d’Elegance of America, and Amelia Island Concours d’Elegance.

**3) 1938 Packard 1607–1139 Twelve Convertible Coupe**

473 cubic inch, 175 horsepower, V12 engine

three-speed transmission

$4,370 base price in 1938

Packards of this era were intentionally understated in their appearance, in consideration of the many who suffered financial hardships during the Great Depression. Note the subdued, single paint color (Columbian Beige), modest use of chrome, and black-wall tires––not mounted on chrome wire wheels, as seen on the other two autos. Observe also how the fenders evolved from the 1934 Packard; they are now elongated teardrop shapes, more integrated with the automobile body, and they more fully enclose the tires and side mount spare.

The University of Notre Dame has historical interests in automobile design. The Department of Art, Art History, and Design previously trained automobile designers, including Virgil M. Exner, Sr. who designed automobiles for General Motors, Studebaker, and Chrysler. His son, Virgil Exner Jr. earned degrees from Notre Dame and designed for Studebaker, General Motors, and Ford.

These three automobiles are generously lent from the Jack B. Smith Jr. Automobile Collection. Smith is a member of the DeBartolo Center for the Performing Arts Advisory Council at the University of Notre Dame, where he and his wife Laura D. Arauz Smith funded the Laura and Jack Boyd Smith Jr. Endowment for Excellence in Performing Arts; they generously support the Notre Dame Summer Shakespeare program (Mrs. Smith serves on its advisory board); they have also supported a fellowship in the Mendoza School of Business, the Smith Library Collection in Business, and teaching labs within the Jordan Hall of Science. In 2016, the Smiths purchased for the Snite Museum of Art permanent collection an iconic, 1913 photograph of the Grand Prix auto race by French photographer Jacques-Henri Lartigue.

image caption: detail, 1934 Auburn 1250 V12 Salon Cabriolet

**The Snite Museum of Art, University of Notre Dame**

The Snite Museum of Art is located on the campus of the University of Notre Dame, near South Bend, Indiana. Museum hours are Tuesday through Friday, 10:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.; and Saturdays and Sundays Noon–5:00 p.m. Admission is free. Museum information is available at 574-631-5466 or at the Museum’s website: [sniteartmuseum.nd.edu.](sniteartmuseum.nd.edu) Driving directions and parking information are available at <http://nd.edu/visitors/directions/>. Find us at facebook.com.

The Snite Museum of Art provides opportunities to enjoy, respond to, learn from, and be inspired by original works of art. As a department of the University of Notre Dame, the Museum supports teaching and research; creates and shares knowledge, celebrates diversity through the visual arts, serves the local community, and explores spiritual dimensions of art.

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