

The “Kaiser Flyer” Series



A brief glimpse of the Kaiser and Frazer Automobiles

Preface

Kaiser-Frazer Motors of Willow Run, Michigan, USA, built some of America's most interesting and unique automobiles during their very short existence from 1946 until 1955.

Just as World War II was ending, the Kaiser-Frazer Corporation was formed to produce new Automobiles for the new-car thirsty post-war crowds. The first Kaiser-Frazer Cars were released in 1946 as the first mass-produced 1947 new car models. They were unique designs for their time with design contributions by Mr. Howard "Dutch" Darrin who also designed several "custom-bodied" cars including Rolls-Royce, Duesenberg and the famous "Packard Darrin." He also designed and built the prototype of the beautiful "Kaiser Darrin" fiberglass sports car.

Although Darrin had created an entirely new modern design for the 1947 Kaiser-Frazer cars, he felt that the Kaiser-Frazer engineers had ruined his design with major compromises to rush the new 1947 models into production, and he was furious. Darrin's design was much more low-slung and sleek with a unique "Darrin dip" on the rear fenders, and although Darrin's basic body lines were somewhat adapted and the first Kaisers and Frazers were quite good-looking, they were much more fat and bulbous than the original Darrin design. The first production cars were issued with a "Styled by Darrin" script. Darrin quickly had them discontinued from the remainder of the 1948-50 cars. He felt that strong about the modifications to his original design.

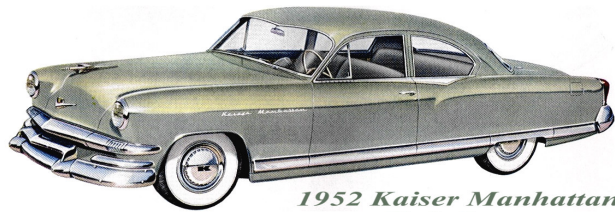
During the years 1947 through 1954, Howard Darrin continued to contribute his design talents to Kaiser (Frazer had bowed out of the company in 1951). However it was not until the 1951 Kaiser cars were produced that Howard Darrin felt his original and beautiful design ideas were adequately applied to the Kaiser cars. He proudly allowed the return of the "Styled by Darrin" script emblem to the 1951 models. The 1951 Kaiser was a truly unique and very beautiful car. It won many international awards and was given rave reviews throughout the industry, especially for its beauty, and is still considered today as one of the most pleasant-looking American automobiles ever mass-produced.

Kaiser-Frazer created the biggest threat ever made to the Detroit establishment of US Automakers. The Kaiser-Frazer organization gave Detroit a real “wake-up” call with its new designs and revolutionary new car models and features. Things would never be the same after the Kaiser-Frazer venture. No other group of people had the post-war impact on the American Automobile that this “up-start” free-thinking group of widely diverse professionals had. Even though several independent car makers such as Packard, Studebaker, Hudson and Nash certainly impacted the “Detroit Establishment,” their combined overall post-war impact was minuscule compared to Kaiser-Frazer. Credit has never been properly given to the Kaiser-Frazer organization for their many contributions to the industry, both in the United States and overseas.

Many don’t realize even now that K-F’s impact did not stop at our shores. Their overseas operations and influence were substantial. Contrary to the belief of some, even the “foreign influence” from the eastern (Japan, Tiwain, etc.) and European countries (Germany, England, Italy, etc.) did not have the impact on the American automotive industry that the Kaiser-Frazer organization had, especially considering it’s short life.

The Kaiser and Frazer cars were only produced in the United States from 1946 through 1955. (They were produced in Argentina until 1962) A very brief period for such a unique and quality line of cars. Several factors determined the premature end of the Kaiser car line. Some were under the control of Henry J. Kaiser himself and some were not.

This series of “Kaiser Flyers,” currently numbered 1 through 10, has been written by “Kaiser Bill” Brown to help inform the general public about these fine automobiles and their history. These “flyers” are distributed at “Kaiser Bill’s” Utah Auto Museum and at car shows where “Kaiser Bill” displays one or more of his Kaiser, Frazer, Henry-J or Kaiser-Darrin cars. Each flyer in this series explains a different aspect of the Kaiser-Frazer cars. Since the “Kaiser Flyers” are usually handed out singularly you will note some repetition among them. “Kaiser Bill” Brown is one of the largest private collectors of Kaiser, Frazer, Henry-J and Darrin automobiles and their historic memorabilia. “Kaiser Bill’s” Dad was one of the original Kaiser-Frazer Dealers who signed on with K-F in early 1946 stayed until the end. He visited the Kaiser-Frazer factory on many occasions and passed his personal interest in these automobiles on to his son, “Kaiser Bill.” If you would like more information about these unusual automobiles or copies of the other Kaiser “Flyers” you may contact the author, “Kaiser Bill” Brown at the address listed in the footnote. (See list of “Kaiser Flyers” on next page)



*1952 Kaiser Manhattan
Club Coupe*

INDEX to Bill's interesting and informative "Kaiser Flyers:" (great for car show displays)

Preface	Explains this series of informative "Flyers"
No. 1	How about the "V" Emblem?
No. 2	Doomed from the beginning?
No. 3	The "Small Car" gas problem
No. 4	What about the Kaiser-Darrin Sports Car?
No. 5	Joseph W. (Jeeps) Frazer
No. 6	The Kaiser "Henry-J"
No. 7	The unique Kaiser-Frazer "Traveler & Vagabond"
No. 8	The Graham-Paige "KAISER"?
No. 9	What, a "Front-Wheel-Drive" Kaiser??
No. 10	How about Kaiser's "Other" Sports Car??
No. 11	(Coming soon) - Do you know "Why Kaiser-Frazer Failed?"

(Please Note: Flyers are \$1.00 each to cover copying & postage costs)

FOOTNOTE:

Due to the Henry J. Kaiser's unique ideas and forward-thinking Kaiser-Frazer engineers and partly due to Howard Darrin's design features, several of the Kaiser Automobiles have been designated as "Milestone Cars" by the Milestone Car Society. These models are:



1949-50 Kaiser Traveler & Vagabond - The first real American "Hatch-Back" Sedan which converted into a station wagon



1949-50 Kaiser Virginian - First American post-war 4-dr Hardtop. Top of the line luxurious model with fine appointments. Most had real leather upholstery and padded top.



1951 Kaiser Deluxe - Beautiful and Unique Over-All Patented Design with the Largest Glass Area of any production car.



1952 Kaiser Virginian Deluxe - regular production model with a factory rear Continental Kit offered in both "Hatchback" and regular body style.



1951-3 Kaiser Dragon "Hardtop" - Started the Modern Luxurious Interior Design with Elegant Bright Colors, and introduced Gold-Plated exterior trim.



1954-55 Kaiser Manhattan - 1st post-war US Supercharged regular production automobile. (Later the same supercharger set-up was used by Ford for the 1957 Thunderbird and By Studebaker in it's Golden Hawk.)



1952-58 Kaiser Darrin Roadster - First All-USA regular production 2-Place Fiberglass Sports Car with unique sliding doors. Designed in 1950-52 by Howard "Dutch" Darrin and first shown at the Los Angeles Auto Show in the fall of 1952.

*(Note: Some 50 to 85 were reportedly sold directly by Howard Darrin as "Darrins")
Also see "Standard Catalog of American Cars" 1946-1975 by Krause Pub.*