

Glossary

Automotive body designers often used traditional coachbuilding terms to describe new designs. As automotive styling diverged from traditional coach styles, these terms were often applied imaginatively. Designers took creative liberties with terms which could be contradictory from make to make as did sales managers attempting to create an aura of, for example, sportiness. Terms such as “sedanca” and “deVille” have been applied so broadly to so many different body styles as to render them almost meaningless for exact descriptive purposes. Good luck....

Abbreviations: Br.- British; Fr. - French; It. -Italian

ANTIQUE

A general description of any car that is 25 years old or more. All Full Classics(tm) are antiques, but not all antiques are Full Classics(tm) as defined by the club.

ALL WEATHER or ALLWEATHER

A term used in the twenties and rarely in the thirties for a Cabriolet. In England it can denote a four door convertible sedan.

BARCETTA

“little boat”, a two seater roadster with flowing lines.

BAROUCHE

A carriage term very rarely used for automobiles. The driver sat in an open front seat with two couples facing each other inside a closed cabin. There was a folding top over the rear seat.

BEACH WAGON

A term for station wagon used mostly in New England.

BERLINE

A sedan

BOATTAIL

A speedster with a tapering (i.e. V-shaped) rear section

BONNET

(Br.) the hood over the front engine

BOOT

(Br.) the trunk

BRASS ERA

Cars built before 1915, also referred to as Horseless Carriages by the Horseless Carriage Club of America. As the name would suggest, these cars used brass for most trim pieces.. Brass began to be phased out about 1913 in favor of nickel, which was eventually abandoned in favor of chrome.

BREACK

(Fr.) station wagon

BROUGHAM

in early motoring a broad term signifying a closed car for two or four persons. In later forms often with an open front driver’s compartment. When with sharp lines and flat surfaces it was called a PANEL BROUGHAM.

BUSINESS COUPE

A simple two door coupe without a rumble seat

CABRIOLET

A convertible with windows. Most people think of this as a two door car, but in fact some were four door.

CALIFORNIA TOP

A fixed rigid top applied to a touring car replacing the regular folding top, usually with sliding glass windows for weather protection.

CCCA CLASSIC

A term defined by the Classic Car Club of America to include only specific important marques built largely between 1925 and 1948. See a list of CCCA Classics on our website.

CLASSIC CAR

When used by the Classic Car Club of America, it is an exclusive list that includes only specific important marques built between largely between 1925 and 1948. The term is often applied loosely by owners to any car.

CLASSIC

(Br.) Post WW-2 collectable car. These are not the cars CCCA is talking about, but our friends in the UK are. We are indeed two nations separated by a common language.

CLUB COUPE

A two door closed car with a rear seat.

COACH

A two door sedan

CONCOURS

A gathering or show of the elegant. It is often misspelled “concourse” which means a driveway, promenade or open space as in an air terminal.

CONVERTIBLE

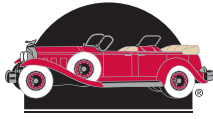
A car with a folding top and windows.

CONVERTIBLE ROADSTER

A convertible is an open car with windows; a roadster is an open car without windows, hence a term which contradicts itself. Used by Lincoln, Chrysler and others about 1930 to emphasize sportiness.

CONVERTIBLE VICTORIA

A four passenger two door two window cabriolet.



COUPE

A closed car with two doors for two or three people. May also have a rudimentary rear seat in which case it is usually called a Club Coupe.

COUPE CHAUFFEUR

(Fr.) chauffeur driven car with passengers fully enclosed and the chauffeur exposed. Body has a blind rear quarter.

COUPE de VILLE

“town coupe” applied imaginatively to various body styles Usually a four passenger two door car with a permanently closed roof over the rear seats and a removable top covering the front seats. But Renault and Bugatti used this term for a Panel Brougham. See SEDANCA.

COUPELET

A term used especially by Ford to describe a Model T two seater Cabriolet.

COUPE LIMOUSINE

(Fr.) chauffeur driven car with the passengers fully enclosed and the chauffeur exposed. Body has rear quarter windows.

COUPE MILORD

(Fr.) See VICTORIA

CYCLE FENDERS

Usually a front and sometimes a rear fender similar to that used on a bicycle which follows the curvature of the wheel .

DeVILLE EXTENSION

A sliding roof over the front seat with side arms that folded back into the remaining roof thus producing a Sedanca configuration in metal rather than the usual fabric.

DICKEY

(Br.) Rumble seat

DROPHEAD

(Br.) - convertible, usually a “Drophead Coupe”.

DUAL COWL

A touring car with a rear windshield mounted on a folding cowl which covers part of the rear compartment.

ESTATE CAR

A station wagon

FAUX CABRIOLET

(Fr.) A fixed head coupe made to resemble a cabriolet.

FINE-LINE

(Br.) A body stripe

FIXED HEAD COUPE

(Br.) - a closed coupe

FORDOR

Ford’s name for a four door sedan.

FULL CLASSIC

A term defined by the Classic Car Club of America to include only specific important marques built largely between 1925 and 1948. See a list of Full Classics(tm) on our website.

GOUTTE d’EAU

(Fr.) A body with a “tear drop” design, flowing down to the rear.

GOVERNOR

A device used with the carburetor to maintain constant engine speed regardless of load.

GRAN TURISMO

(It.) grand touring

GP

(Fr.) Grand Prix (Great Prize)

GT

Grand Touring

HOOD

The sheet metal covering the engine

HOOD

(Br.) A convertible top

HORSELESS CARRIAGE

Cars earlier than 1915, Also referred to as Brass Era cars.

HORSEPOWER

A unit of work. 550 foot pounds per second or .745kw

LANDAU

A two seated vehicle which could be fully converted by a two section opening convertible top. Rarely used in automobiles.

LANDAULET

A limousine in which the section over the rear seat opens.

LANDAULETTE

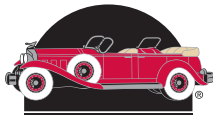
(Fr.) A two door car in which the the top over the rear seats folds down.

LIGHT

A side window.

LIMOUSINE

A chauffeured sedan often with a longer wheelbase and usually with a division between the chauffeur and the passengers. In the Classic Era and later, the rear compartment had luxurious features with controls for heating, radio and opening and closing the glass division.



MARQUE

(Fr.) (Pronounced "Mark") A make or brand of car.

MM

Mille Miglia, a 1000 mile Italian road race from 1927 to 1957.

MOTHER-IN-LAW SEAT

A single seat attached to the back of a two seater car, the forerunner of the rumble seat. It can also denote a seat placed on the opposite side of the car from the driver.

MUFFLER CUT-OUT

A valve located on the exhaust pipe between the engine and the muffler. When opened it allowed exhaust gas to pass directly to the open air which made a great noise and slightly increased power.

OPERA COUPE

A two door closed car with a small folding seat beside the driver. This allowed easy passage to a rear seat for two, usually offset to the right in left-hand drive cars.

PANEL BROUGHAM

see BROUGHAM

PHAETON

From the Greek "Phaethon" who drove the chariot of his sun-god father, Helios. A four door open touring car.

PICKING-OUT

(Br.) A molding color in contrast to a body color

QUARTER WINDOW or QUARTER LIGHT

The side window behind the rear door. In very early British usage, the rear window was sometimes counted as a quarter light.

SPORTIF

A very tight or narrow phaeton. Used by Locomobile among others.

SPORT COUPE

A closed coupe with a cloth top and sometimes landau irons resembling a convertible.

STATION WAGON

A utility car built of wood, typically with four doors.

STRANGLER

(Br.) A carburetor choke.

SUBURBAN

A seven passenger limousine.

SUICIDE DOOR

A rear hinged door, typically for the front seat. At speed any chance opening would cause the door to whip backward with great force.

SUPERLEGGERA

(It.) super light.

THREE POSITION COUPE

A Coupe De Ville which may be presented as a fully closed coupe, a deVille Coupe with the front section open or a fully collapsible convertible.

TONNEAU

The rear compartment of a car body, usually an open touring body.

TORPEDO

(Fr.) an very smooth touring car without horizontal moldings.

TOURING CAR

A four door open car without windows.

TOWN CABRIOLET

A town car in which the covered rear section converts to an open car.

TOWN CAR

A chauffeur driven car with the passengers fully enclosed and the chauffeur exposed. Also known as a SEDANCA de VILLE or TOWN BROUGHAM

TRANSFORMABLE

(Fr.) a four door convertible with windows.

TRANSFORMABLE TOWN CAR

See Town Cabriolet

TUDOR SEDAN

Ford's term for a two door.

TWIN SIX

Packard's first twelve cylinder car introduced in late 1915 and produced until 1920. When the new V12 was reintroduced by Packard in 1932, the term was reused for that first year only.

VETERAN

(BR.) Cars older than "vintage". (See Below)

VICTORIA

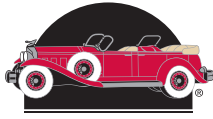
A close coupled two door sedan or an enlarged coupe with a rear seat. An opera coupe. Also a four door open car with folding top over the rear seat only. Known in France as a COUPE MILORD.

VINTAGE

Formerly a term describing cars built between 1915 and 1925 but now used broadly, especially in England, to include cars manufactured between 1920 and 1942.

WEYMANN

A patented body in which wooden frame members were joined by metal strips preventing the wood from touching and squeaking.



WINDOW STRAP

A strap attached to the base of a window which passed inside the body up to the sill and into the interior of the car. It could be used to pull the window up. Holes in the strap could be buckled against an interior pin to hold the window at various elevations.

WINDSCREEN

(Br.) Windshield

WING

(Br.) Fender

WINTER FRONT

A patented name for a shuttered radiator cover by the Pines Co. which could be opened and closed to regulate engine temperature.

WOODY

A motor vehicle incorporating natural finished wood for structure and all exposed parts of the body. The term has been loosely applied to any car which uses wood on the exterior.

And a Few Humorous Contributions:

Antique

Any car older than yourself.

Classic

The car you wanted when you were in high school but could not afford.

New

Any car newer than your oldest child.