

## Behind the Scenes: Creative Workshop's Horseless eCarriage

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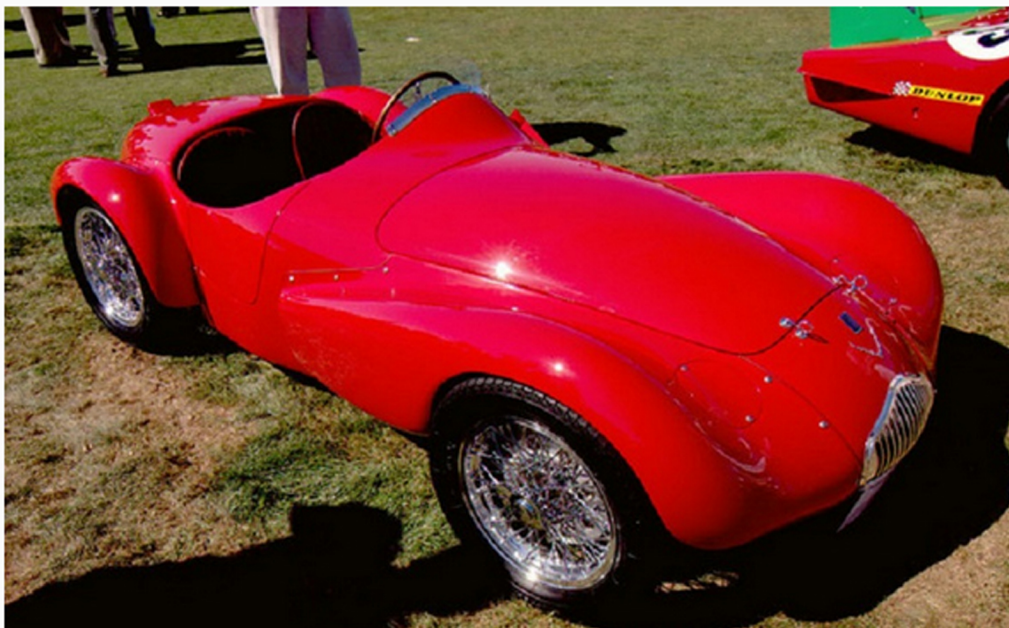


You may have caught a bit of the brouhaha from the New York International Auto Show about the Horseless eCarriage, a car commissioned by New Yorkers for Clean, Livable and Safe Streets (NYCLASS) an animal rights advocacy group that wants to ban horse-drawn carriages from New York City streets and parks. The New York Daily News has launched a campaign to save the carriages, and seemingly every publication in New York has taken one side of the debate or the other. But what all the coverage is missing is the story of the car itself.

NYCLASS contracted The Creative Workshop, a world-class auto restorer out of Dania Beach, Florida, to build this prototype. I first ran into The Creative Workshop's Jason Wenig when I learned of the 1953 MG Sport Speciale his team of craftsmen restored. That car had a pedigree that included the 24 Hour race at Sebring, when that event was nothing more than haybales at an airstrip.



We photographed that car, as well as a Connaught L3/SR which we put on the cover of *Hemmings Sports & Exotic Car*. He also restored a gorgeous Staguellini that made it all the way to the lawn at Pebble Beach, where it scored a third place finish in its class.



Suffice it to say that Jason Wenig's staff is top-notch. But the truly interesting thing is that NYCLASS contracted anyone at all. Whether you agree with the idea that the horse-and-carriage should be replaced or not, the idea that somebody would actually contract a professional to build a functional prototype is remarkable. There are plenty of advocacy groups that want to bitch and moan about some state of affairs or another, but a select few that will actually put cash on the barrelhead to deliver an alternative.

NYCLASS put up nearly a half million dollars for the development of the prototype you see here. Granted, that sounds like a lot of money to prove a point. But consider this: For that investment, they got a fully functioning prototype that passes all DOT and NHTSA requirements.

When General Motors developed the EV1 — a car they knew they'd never sell — it cost \$500 million.

It would have been easy enough to throw a body on a bus chassis and be done with it, but this prototype is a throwback to an era of coachbuilding.

Is it big? Sure. It's got to be big to take nine people around in open luxury. But it's no bigger than the horse and carriage it replaces, and with an expected maximum of fewer than 70 cars produced for the city, in terms of overall space, it's a wash. It's also approximately the same size as the grand touring cars of the 1920s, the style and majesty of which this vehicle is designed to evoke.

Is it heavy? It weighs 7,500 pounds, but it was designed to carry the load of the lithium batteries and you and all your friends. The weight puts it between something like a Suburban and a shuttle bus. Remember, this is designed to drive people at no greater than 30 mph through central park, with passengers sitting up high so they can truly appreciate the city, not carving off-ramps at 85 miles per hour on the Van Wyck.

The prototype process included drawings, 3D printing and eventually hand-building a scale model of the finished product. Everything from the radiator to the hub covers, to fenders and seats was hand-built, hand-painted, hand-pinstriped. Not only is the Horseless E-Carriage an innovative means of shutting tourists around the city; it is the intricately crafted beneficiary of some of the best craftsman the world have to offer.

To take a look at the work that went into building it:  
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