

THE \$1.62 MILLION BUICK

That's what an unnamed bidder paid at a recent Barrett-Jackson automobile auction to acquire a low mileage 1953 Roadmaster hardtop sedan once owned by eccentric billionaire and aviation pioneer Howard Hughes.

The pastel blue and sea green car was modified with a 24-volt electrical system powerful enough to start Hughes' personal aircraft, enabling him to drive directly onto the tarmac, jumpstart the plane and free the paparazzi - without even having to dash from a parking lot through a terminal.

The Roadmaster's air conditioner was converted to run on electricity, so that Hughes could keep cool, even with the engine off. The interior also features a cabin air filtration system designed by Hughes himself that incorporates a dust trap and bacterial filter - features that are only just now becoming available on modern cars.



Howard Hughes' Buick

Hughes used the car for transportation as well as a mobile office when he stayed in California at the Beverley Hills Hotel - where he maintained one of his many residences. It was an especially beloved possession and Hughes had it secreted away in storage, where it remained for decades after his death on April 5th, 1976.

According to Craig Jackson of the Barrett-Jackson Auction Company, the \$1.62 million paid for the Hughes' Buick is "a phenomenal price for this one-of-a-kind piece of Americana". It is also apparently the most money ever paid for a Buick.

Another famous - and collectable - antique Buick is the cream-coloured 1949 Roadmaster convertible used in the hit movie, "Rain Man" with Tom Cruise and Dustin Hoffman. This car is currently being restored to show worthy condition.

(The above article, written by Eric Peters, was taken from the Buick Performance Group Magazine.)

L. Haime (WA Buicks)

