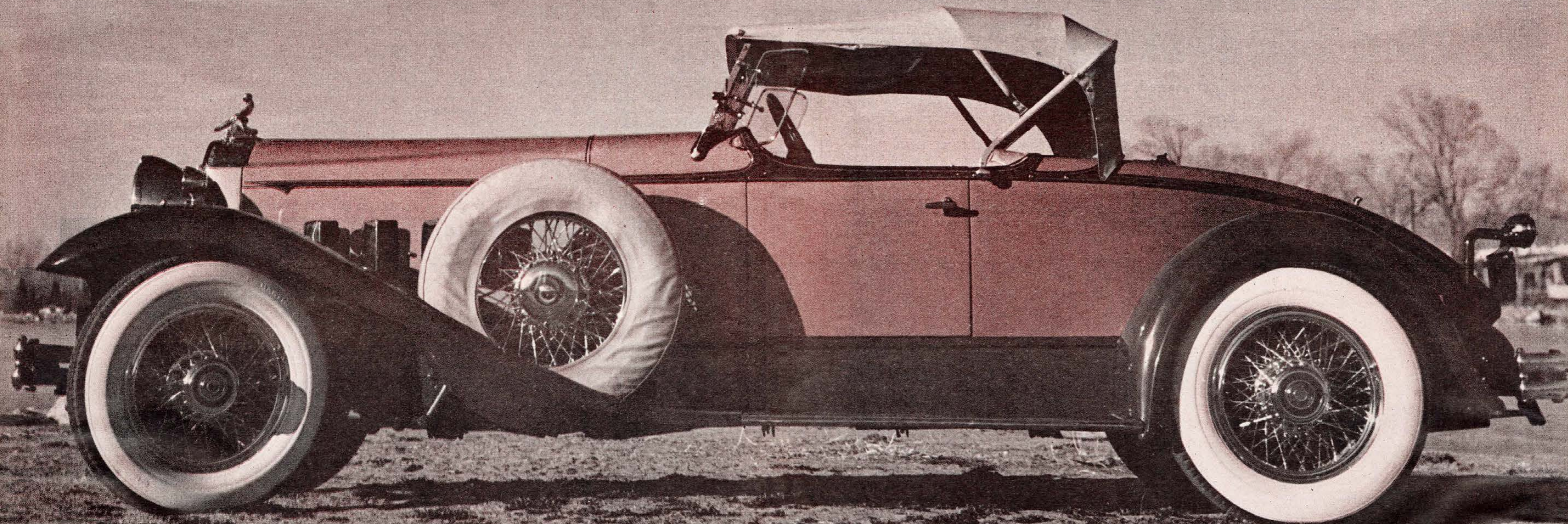
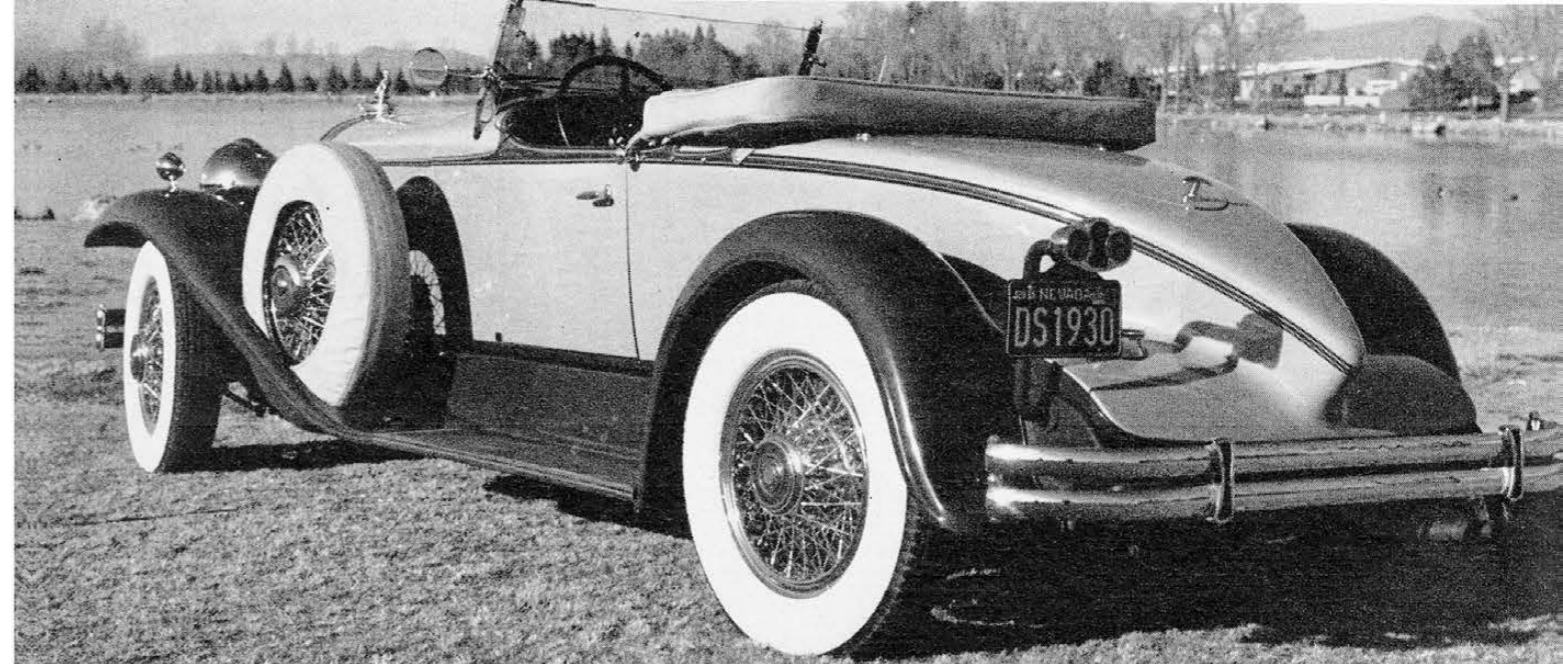
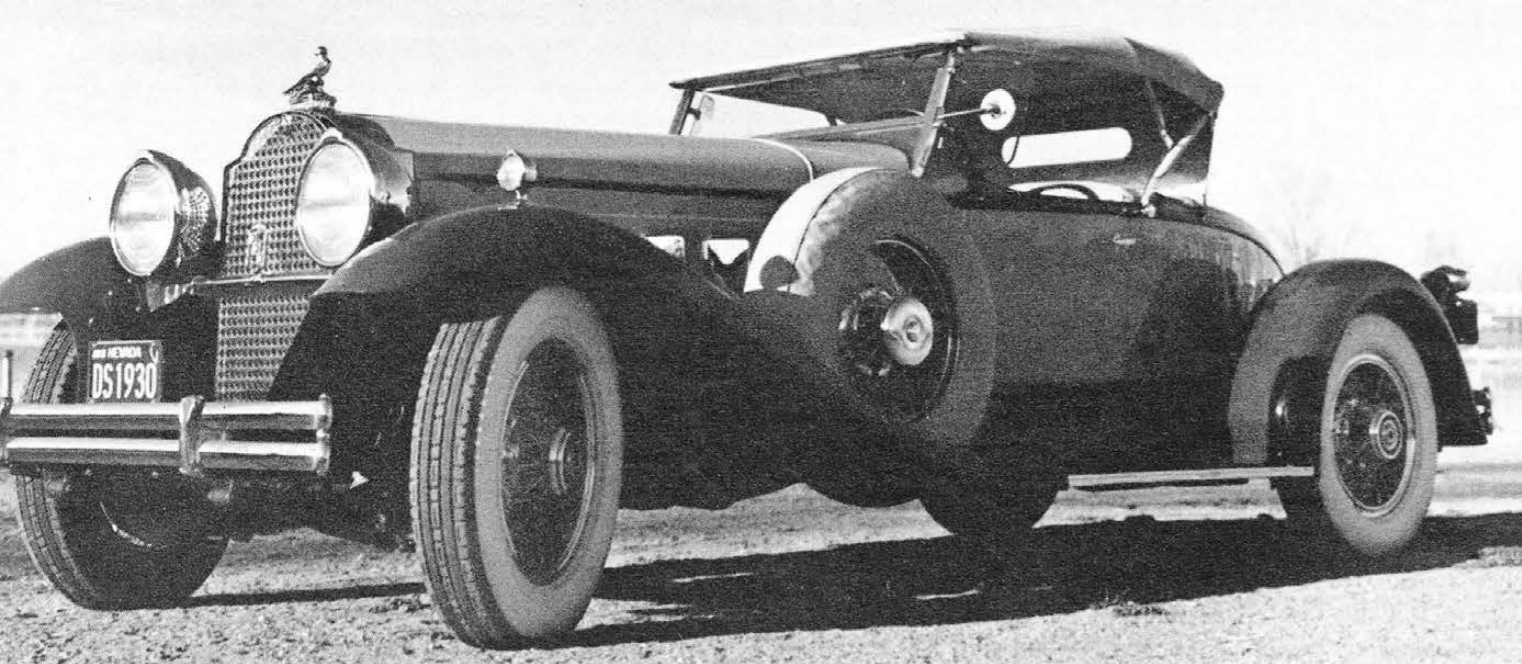


A Car Life Classic



**PACKARD 734**





# 1930 PACKARD 734 Boattail Speedster

BY WILLIAM H. LAUER

PHOTOS BY MARVIN LYONS

**I**N A DASHING display of one-upmanship, Packard Motor Car Co. in 1930 began producing its own boat-tailed Speedster, to fulfill the desire of its customers for a racy runabout of the type popularized by Auburn. Packard's 734 Speedster, however, was able to exhibit its fashionable rear end to the earlier style-setter through its abil-

ity to pass the magic century mark with ease.

This was accomplished by the simple expedient of fitting a larger powerplant, in this case the largest in-line eight the company ever built. The Packard 384.8-cu. in. engine, which developed 145 bhp, as compared with its normal 105 bhp, was installed in Speedster

models. A special 2-throat Detroit Lubricator carburetor and higher-than-normal compression ratio were used on the Speedster engine. Valves were in the block in the usual L-head arrangement and the exhaust manifold was finned for better heat dissipation, another special feature of this model.

The crankcase and oil pan were cast of aluminum and housed a Packard trademark, the 9-main bearing crankshaft—a beautifully machined monster that imbued the car with a delightful smoothness. This velvety feel was furthered by matching the weight of each set of pistons to within 0.25 oz. maximum variation and connecting rods to within 0.0625 oz. A damper mounted between the forward end of the crankshaft and the lower fan-belt pulley

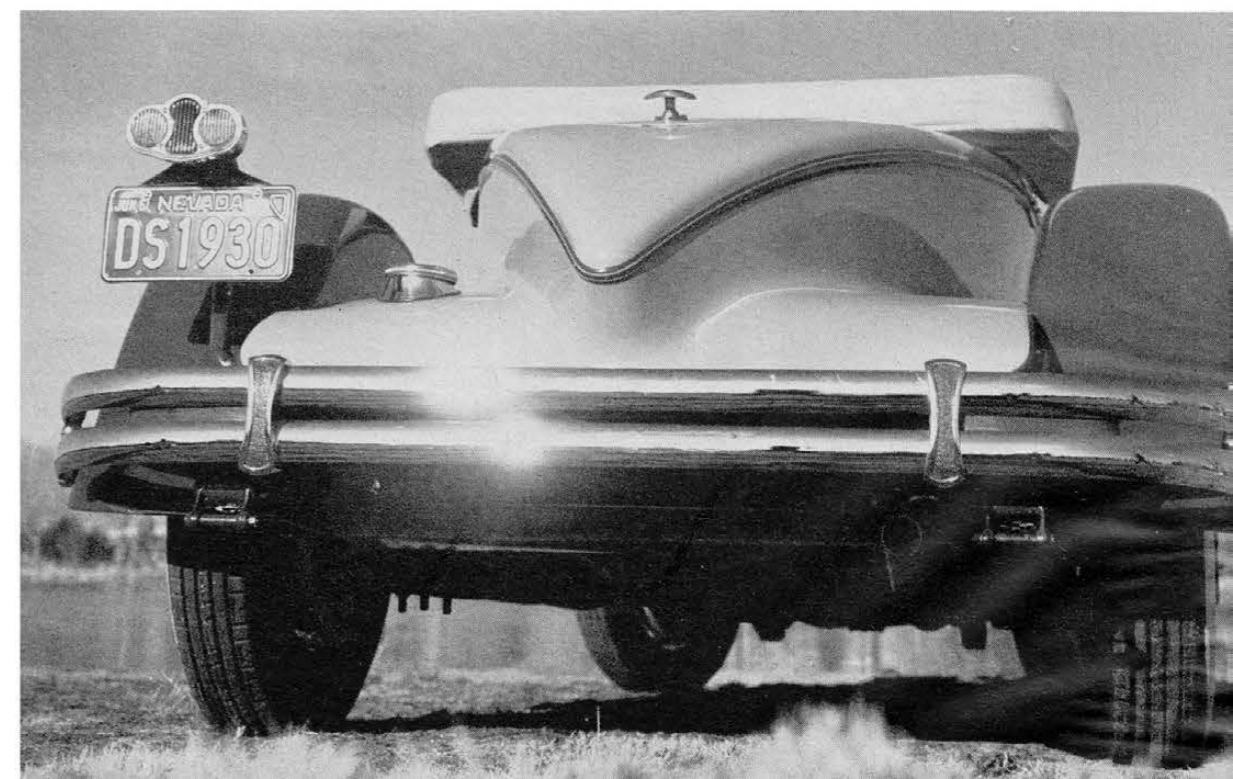
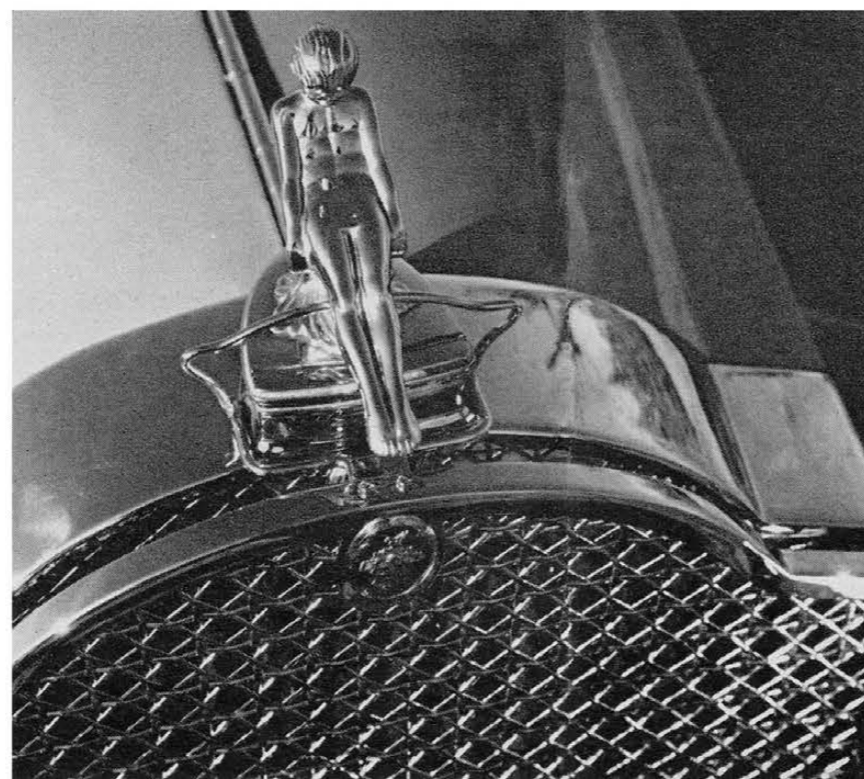
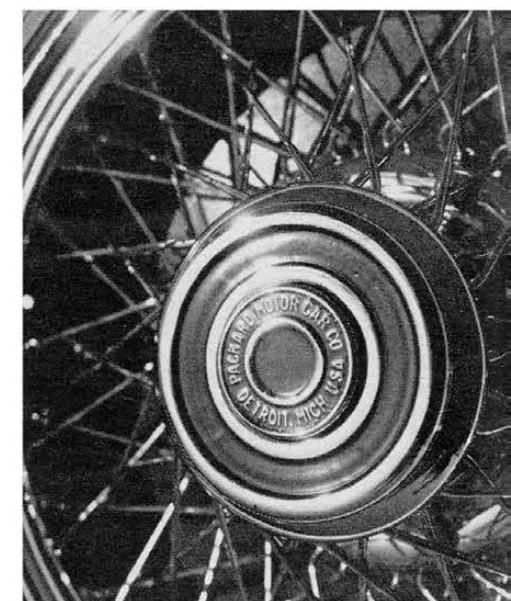
eliminated torsional vibration. Despite the generous use of aluminum, the engine and clutch assembly weighed some 1200 lb., including the crankshaft of 125 lb.

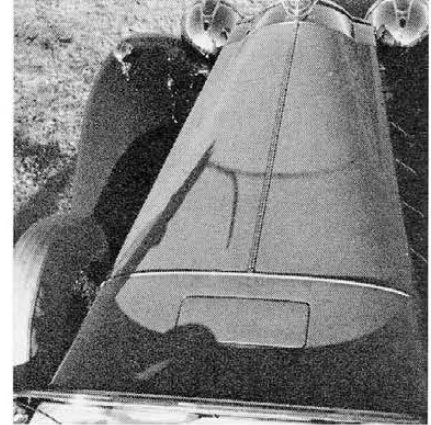
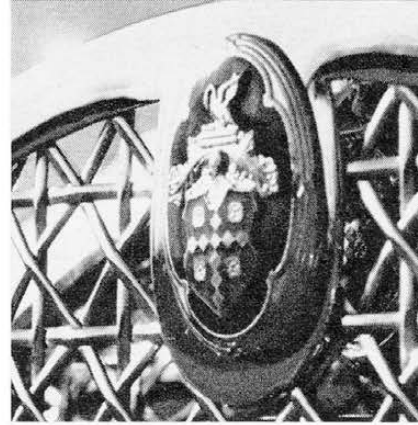
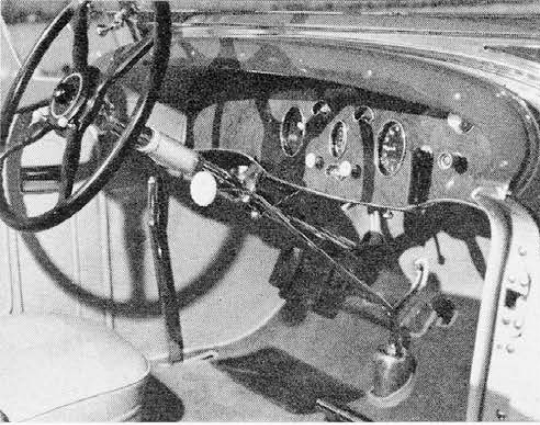
While lacking some of the eye appeal of the Model L or Model KB Lincolns, the Packard engine compartment still was impressive, with its green-finished engine and porcelained manifolds. Polished aluminum, black enamel and nicked parts accentuated the engine's appearance, which also impressed the viewer with its simple component layout.

The chassis of the Speedster was a standard unit, but was augmented with some features found on no other Packard. As an example, the hydraulic shock absorbers designed and manu-

factured by Packard had metering valves for riding adjustments and were bolted directly onto the front axles. The rear shocks were 2-way and permitted the use of longer (62 in.) and more resilient springs. Mounted crosswise, these shock absorbers controlled side sway to a great degree. A patented shock-absorbing device mounted at the rear of the left front spring helped eliminate steering wheel fight.

The Bijur centralized lubrication system, which delivered triple-strained and precisely metered amounts of oil to 43 chassis points, was actuated by a pressure pump plunger located under the dash, similar to an overdrive control. Brakes were mechanically operated inside 16-in. drums which, on the Speedster, were finned to control heat





## 1930 PACKARD 734

resulting from high-speed stops.

To help the racy Speedster live up to its name, a rear axle ratio of 3.31:1 was used in place of the standard 4.38:1, and the weight was pared to almost 1000 lb. less than some of the heavier models. This runabout could clock 77 mph in 3rd and 100-107 mph in 4th, depending on road and weather conditions. First gear was hardly used, except for such emergency measures as slogging through heavy sand. Second gear was flexible enough to allow driving in city and suburban areas without shifting, as speeds up to 52 mph were well within its limits.

Packard built less than 150 Model 734 boattail Speedsters and, although they continued to be built through 1934 by such custom builders as LeBaron, none could match the 1930 model for design and balance.

From the doors forward, the Speedster was quite similar to the stock sedans except for a 6-in. lengthening of the cowl. From that point back, the boattail treatment was distinctively Packard. The downward slope was quite severe and the fairing to the hori-

zontal panels out to the fenders was beautifully executed. The Speedster shared Packard's shortest (134 in.) wheelbase with an opera coupe and a 4-passenger phaeton, instead of the regular 140- or 145-in. wheelbases.

The bronze windshield frame was fixed, rather than being of the hinged variety usually fitted at that time, to reduce the possibility of damage by wind at high speeds. Enhancing the overall design were further touches of Packard detail, such as the intricate, chromed stone-shield, the unique radiator ornament ("Daphne at the Well"), the parking lights and headlamps with their distinctive top styling carrying out the Packard radiator shape, the magnificent sweep of the front fenders

and the curved cowl line flowing back to the tip of the boattail.

Interior appointments, in the usual Packard manner, included lush carpeting, upholstery in top leather and a wood-grained dash.

The specimen illustrated here is one of only six known to be in existence and has passed through several hands in the recent past. Julian Eccles Klamath Falls, Ore., a collector of exotic cars, owns a mate to the Speedster and purchased it, in somewhat disreputable condition, as a parts car. It was then acquired by George Warner of Van Nuys, Calif., a well known Packard restorer, who in turn sold it to William Harrah of Reno, Nev., to become part of Harrah's mammoth collection. ■

### TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS 1930 Packard 734 Boattail Speedster

Engine.....Packard, L-head, 9 main bearings  
Cylinders.....Eight in-line  
Bore & Stroke, in.....3.5 x 5  
Displacement, cu. in.....384.8  
Piston type.....aluminum, 4 ring  
Brake horsepower.....145  
Rated Horsepower, SAE.....39.2  
Carburetor.....Detroit Lubricator, two-throat  
Crankcase capacity, qt.....10  
Coolant capacity, gal.....6.5

Fuel capacity, gal.....28  
Fuel consumption.....Approx. 14 mpg  
Transmission.....4 speeds forward, 1 reverse  
ratios.....3.62, 2.12, 1.34, 1.00  
Axle ratio.....3.31:1  
Front suspension.....Semi-elliptics, 2.25 x 42 in.  
Rear suspension.....Semi-elliptics, 2.5 x 62 in.  
Wheelbase.....134.5 in.  
Tires.....6.50-20

