

# Cover Car Story: Slo' is the Way to Go

By Dave Neuhaus



*Dave and Toni Neuhaus with their 1911 Hupmobile Model 20 Torpedo Roadster at the Evansville Warbird Museum. The Hoosier Spirit II is a P-47 Thunderbolt.*

Sometimes you have the most fun while driving slowly. Brass Era cars tend to be slow. But they can be the most enjoyable to drive while taking in the scenery. Our 1911 Hupmobile will go 35 mph, although it takes a while to get there. It's about all you can expect from 17-hp. Hupmobile advertising often hyped it up to 20 hp, as though "Model 20" designated the horse power.

When my wife Toni and I welcomed the car five years ago, I could only get it up to 25 mph. I checked the compression, and it had almost exactly 50 psi on all 4 cylinders (110 cubic inches). I thought that there might be a problem with the Breeze carburetor since the seller gave me a Rayfield carb that he had started to adapt to the car. After going through all the work of

adapting it to fit, the car could still only go 25 mph. The only thing left to try was the timing, which is fixed on this car. To adjust the timing you have to remove the magneto, pop the gear off its taper, turn the keyless gear to a new spot, and bolt it all back up. I took a guess that it was retarded by a lot, like the 15 degrees of the gear teeth, so I moved it by one cog. It worked. However, I thought it could be better. Maybe. I'll fine tune it when I have that elusive thing called time.

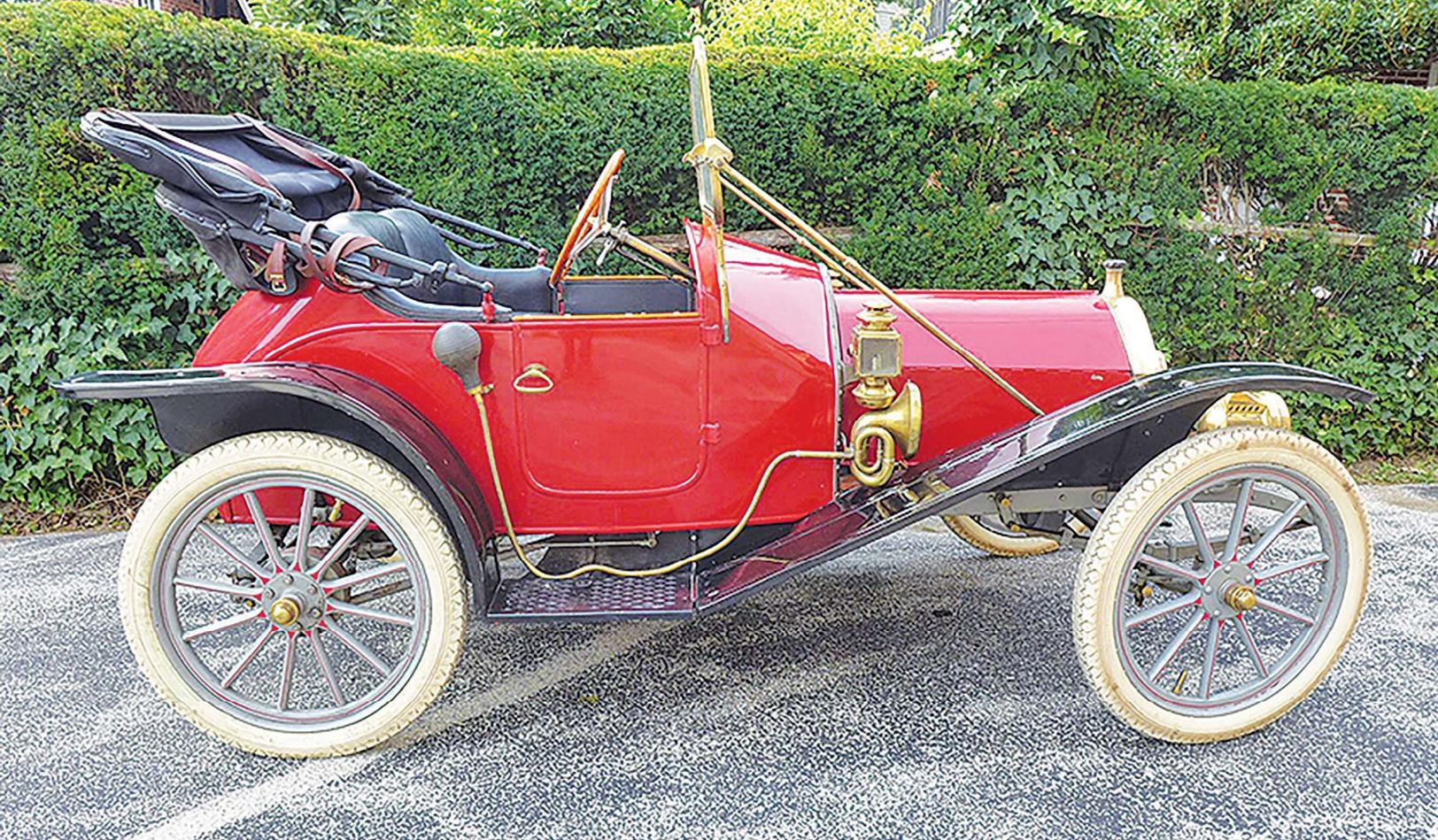
Shifting without grinding is sometimes a challenge. It has a two-speed sliding gear transmission. Normally I have no problem double clutching a car; but this one is like nothing I have ever used. It is a wet-clutch with a brake that slows down the transmission and engine when the clutch is fully depressed. So, for low gear I push the clutch until the engine rpm slows as much as I dare, then pop it in gear. I take off leaving the auto in low until it is revving, pop it in neutral and lift the clutch, then wait... and wait... and wait for the giant flywheel to relent its energy. When the engine goes down to idle, I push the clutch in halfway and high gear drops in without grinding.

Reverse gear is a lot of fun (read "terror"). The car has quick steering and an even quicker reverse requiring fast reflexes. Sometimes when backing I panic and jam the clutch pedal to the floor which applies the clutch brake nearly stopping the car and engine. Then I have to hit the foot brake and lift the clutch. In all that flurry I often bump my leg into the shifter which puts it in neutral. So, all is good, I guess.



*The 1911's dealership badge.*





Above: A profile shot of Dave and Toni's nimble 1911 Hupmobile Model 20 Torpedo Roadster.  
Below: The Hupmobile's dating tag with car number and company motto "Guaranteed for Life".

