

CUNNINGHAM MODEL COLLECTION

Interview with Lawrence Berman by Marshall Buck
Photography by Mark Karlsberg, Studio Eleven, Inc.



While working with his friend, the late John C. Fitch on his racing history & archives, it became apparent that Fitch's main sponsor was Briggs S. Cunningham. Looking further into the Cunningham racing history, Lawrence became deeply interested in this quiet giant of a personality, and his effect on motor racing in the 1950's. For approximately fifteen years, Lawrence has been involved with researching Cunningham; collecting material from international sources, as well as creating the website BriggsCunningham.com and has consulted, and aided in research on numerous books with regard to Cunningham. As part of this activity, he has been collecting Cunningham specific model cars & trucks, as well as signed photos, books, various prints & posters, and more... larry@bermanadjusters.com

1954 Twin Fageol Super Freightier, 1:43 scale, made in Russia!



AR: Tell us a little about yourself, and your interest in cars & collecting.

Lawrence Berman: I have been interested in sports cars – Jaguars – since high school when I got to drive an XK-120 Cabriolet. Attended my 1st U.S. Grand Prix race in 1964 at Watkins Glen & met historian, Bill Green. We are still friends & he has been a great mentor. From 1978 – 1998 I had owned & vintage raced two Jaguar XK-120 roadsters, a 1950 and a '51. Also showed the 1951 in many concours events with its best being 3rd in Class nationally in 1993 JCNA concours



competition. In addition to the model car collection, my hobby is the website BriggsCuunningham.com which has been a great learning experience.

AR: Why Cunningham?

Lawrence Berman: While doing racing history research for John Fitch, I noticed that he drove many races for Briggs Cunningham. I then started researching Mr. "C" and became fascinated with his history & accomplishments. In the beginning, my friend the motorsport writer Carl Goodwin, suggested that as a maximum I might find 200 race entries. The final count was over 800 individual entries!

AR: This is quite an impressive collection you have put together. When did you start with this?

Lawrence Berman: Around 2004 - 2005, and it has just kept on growing.

AR: Your collection appears to



Maserati Type 60 "Birdcage" 1:18 scale.

1960 Corvette, Le Mans 1960, 1:43 scale, with a 1960 Le Mans Drivers medallion.

include everything Cunningham ever campaigned including his own marque. What other marques are included?

Lawrence Berman: Many different marques...Porsche, Cadillac, Cooper, Lotus, Ferrari, OSCA, Jaguar, Corvette, Maserati, and many more. I have attempted to collect a model of each of his race cars. Currently, I am waiting for a Stanguellini Formula Junior model from Italy to be painted French Blue and numbered 63.

AR: Why Models, and where do you find all of them?

Lawrence Berman: I like models, and they take less space, take almost no maintenance (occasional dusting) and cost much less to deal with than real cars! I find & buy from sources worldwide; eBay, many model car sales websites, concours show vendors, vintage car events vendors, referrals, etc.

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AR: How many pieces do you currently have, and in what scales? And, how long is the list of models still needed to complete this collection?

Lawrence Berman: Built models 155; and 24 kits yet to be built. Most pieces are in 1:43 scale, but others include: 1:34; 1:32; 1:24; 1:25; and 1:18. I need approximately 12 more models.

AR: Were most of these readily available, or did you have to have many custom built

Leatherbound Limited edition 2 vol. Cunningham book by Richard Harman. This is one of several books Lawrence aided with research. Two editions, but shown is the rare leatherbound edition, No. 2 of only 60 published by Dalton Watson.



and or modified? And... how many years has it taken to get to this point?

Lawrence Berman: Several were custom built, but very many were modified...re-painted & race numbers changed. It's taken approximately 15 years.

AR: What are some of the rare, and very special pieces?

piece; customized & repainted to resemble the Cunningham machine shop truck. A set of eight(8) 1:43 scale hand carved wooden models by R.D. Manou (France); bought from Bill Emerson who was the author of "The Healey Book." C4R bronze in 1:24 scale mounted on a mahogany book-end with a numbered (#38 of 50) book – "The Life & Cars of Briggs S. Cunningham" – signed by: Briggs Cunningham, Dean



Eight piece 1:43 scale set of hand carved (Balsa Wood) Cunningham Le Mans cars, by R.D. Manou of France. Very old and exceedingly rare.

Lawrence Berman: Many are rare and special, but here are several... 1951 Chrysler Saratoga #39 – Carrera Panamericana race 1:43 scale made from a photo. 1954 Twin Fageol Super Freighter – Cunningham 1:43 scale with box & postage from St. Petersburg (Russia) Tram Collection. 1:24 scale 1960 Corvette made by Jan Hyde. Dodge Route Van by Matchbox - used as a New York Times promotional

Batchelor, John Lamm, John Fitch, Phil Walters and Sherwood Johnston.

AR: What else is in your collection besides models, and where do you display it all?

Lawrence Berman: Framed race posters, framed & signed photos, automotive memorabilia, and a large motorsport book library. The collection is privately held,



displayed in my home office / library.

AR: Has the Cunningham family been involved or helped with anything?

Lawrence Berman: They have encouraged me & allowed me to register the Cunningham Team Checkered Flag Logo trademark in 2012.

Left: Panoramic view of just a portion of the extensive collection.

Right: C4R bronze sculpture by Larry Braun with book showing the irreplaceable signed page.

AR: The Revs Institute has a significant collection of Cunningham cars and past ties to Briggs. Have they been involved in any way?

Lawrence Berman: Yes, REVS has been a huge help with mutual Cunningham research projects; i.e. C2R #5104 history; the history of ownership of Vignale C-3 (25) cars.

AR: What was the best experience you have had with putting this collection together?

Lawrence Berman: The best is the search & locating of the models along with the help & artistic talent of model builder – Dennis Koleber who has done most of the painting, striping, decals, etc.

AR: What has been the most difficult experience you have had with putting this collection together?



Lawrence Berman: Getting a model builder to create a Bu-Merc model from a 1929 Mercedes SSK model. I am still looking if you know someone who could do it & has the time available.

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