



Ken Hufford poses beside the 1935 Dodge coupe which he loaned to Disney for the filming of the movie "Pearl Harbor". Hufford has been a classic car buff since 1961.

Farmer from Hawaii supplies classic cars for 'Pearl Harbor'

Vintage delights are sometimes found in exotic, out-of-the-way places...and sometimes essential to monumental productions.

On the Big Island of Hawai'i, an organic vegetable farmer stores four of his classic cars in a converted greenhouse. Two of them were shipped to Oahu last year for the filming of Walt Disney's "Pearl Harbor": a chiffon-yellow, 1935 Dodge coupe with a rumble seat, and a green, 1941 Pontiac Silver Streak.

Ken Hufford, the owner of these vintage gems, is a 21-year resident of Hawaii and a University of Michigan graduate who's been a classic car buff since attending junior college. In 1961 he traded \$100 and his Lionel train set for a black, 1936 Plymouth sedan.

"No one wanted to be seen in an old car back then," he remembers. The 50s era, however, became "cooler and cooler" and helped kick off what has become an increasingly popular hobby, if not lifestyle.

Classic car clubs have spawned well-attended car shows (a recent one held on the Big Island included inter-island and mainland car owners) and are excellent venues for socializing and sharing of information.

The Walt Disney Company was informed about Ken Hufford through a local car club and he became a guest on the "Pearl Harbor" movie set for one week in April 2000. During this period, filming took place on the Fort Shafter Army Base and also on Ford Island.

Publicity photos were taken on Ford Island with lead actress Kate Beckinsale (who plays a Navy nurse in the film) — and Ken's favorite classic car, the chiffon-yellow Dodge, was used as the backdrop.

"I haven't seen the movie yet," the bearded, six-foot two-inch Hufford recently shared. He was packing up his produce stand after the Saturday farmer's market in pastoral Waimea which is nestled on the slopes of the Kohala Mountains. He admits to some controversy over the 1935 Dodge coupe.

"When I drove the Dodge onto the set

the first day, representatives of the Walt Disney Company were pretty excited. Director Michael Bay wanted to include it in a ferry scene with Beckinsale and four other actresses." Later, however, just before filming began, another executive expressed doubts over the classic car's "bright" color.

About 20 other cars were on the set that week. All in mint condition — except for a black Buick convertible with ready-made bullet holes provided by a company from the mainland — the verbal tug-of-war escalated over the Dodge's suitability for cinematography. One studio head preferred a 1936 beige-green Ford that's owned by an Oahu resident.

"This film is about people, not cars!" Ken remembers one of the executives exclaiming. End of story.

Or is it? Until Ken and his wife, Roen, are able to take time away from their picturesque 10-acre Honopua Farm (they also grow three acres of vegetables on adjacent property) and from their two sons, Joseph and Joshua, moviegoers will have to decide if their vintage automobiles actually appear in the film.

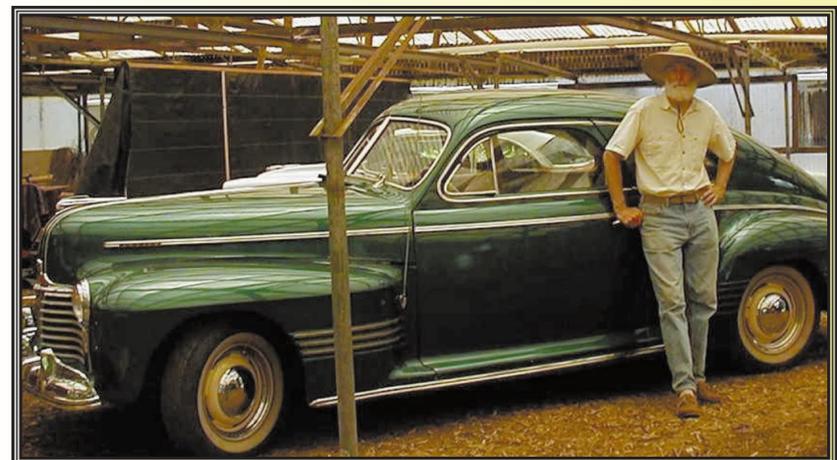
The 1935 Dodge with rumble seat should be easy to spot: spare tires are mounted on the front fenders (twin side-mounts, as car buffs call them), and there's a distinctive hood ornament (a \$400 authentic reproduction of a ram).

Hint: One of the attack scenes in "Pearl Harbor" takes place on a wide, car-lined street...and to the right is what looks like a 40s-era, chiffon-yellow Dodge facing the camera.)

(C.E. Chambers is a freelance journalist who has lived in three countries and recently moved to Hawaii from the mainland. Widely published throughout north-west Washington and circulated internationally, her work most recently appeared in the Hawaii Army News. She continues to study Hawaiian history and classic cars and is working on a book about World War II.)



Above: Vintage cars attracted car buffs at a car show held on the Big Island on July 4. The coral and white 1955 Oldsmobile 98 hardtop shown in the foreground is also a car from Hufford's classic collection. However, it was not used in the making of "Pearl Harbor". Left: Ken Hufford's reflection can be seen in the side mirror of the 1941 Pontiac Silver Streak.



Top: Ken Hufford takes a few moments to relax beside the Silver Streak before an upcoming classic car show.



Left: The distinctive hood ornament from the 1935 chiffon-yellow Dodge is a \$400 authentic reproduction of a ram.



Above: Car buffs admire the Silver Streak which was used in the recent Disney production of "Pearl Harbor". The 1941 Pontiac was on display at a July 4 vintage car show on the Big Island.

By C. E. Chambers
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