

Movie Cars

In 2012 for the first time in history, over 60 million passenger cars will be produced in a single year. Within a multitude of makers and makes, there are some cars that stand out. What is it that takes a vehicle out of the car pool and into the collective consciousness of Joe Public?

The answer may be the silver screen. Just like movie stars, movie cars can be icons of an era. It is with a feeling of nostalgia that we offer our top ten movie cars, the good, the bad and the ugly.

10 The Dodge Monaco Sedan (*The Blues Brothers*)

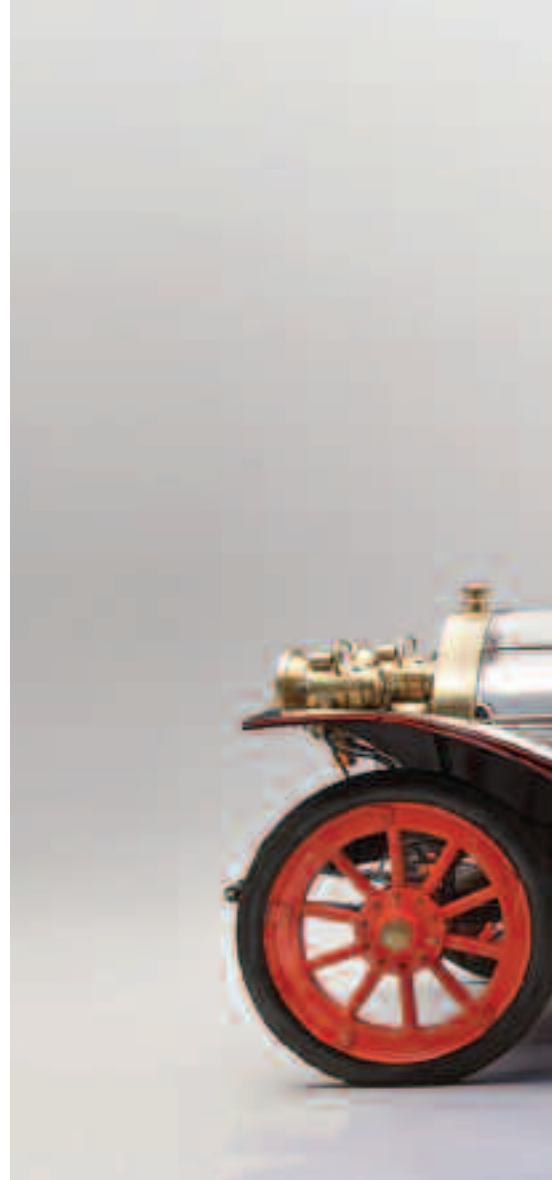
The Bluesmobile is a 1974 Dodge Monaco sedan from the 1980 movie *The Blues Brothers*. In the film, it is described as a used Mount Prospect police car but in fact, it was a mocked up former California Highway Patrol car.

The movie used 13 different cars to depict the Bluesmobile, some formatted for speed, and others for jumps or high performance

manoeuvres. One was designed purely to fall apart upon its arrival at the Daley Centre. The production unit kept a 24 hour body shop open for repairs during filming. At the time of the movie's release, it held the world record for the most cars destroyed in one film until it was surpassed by its own sequel.

09 The Ford Deluxe Convertible (*Grease*)

If you have seen the iconic 1978 movie *Grease*, you know that Greased Lightning is the car that John Travolta and the T-Birds restore over the course of a rousing musical number and turn into a dream machine that can win races. It was in fact a 1948 Ford Deluxe convertible.



The other cars used in the movie have largely disappeared into obscurity, and the original production car was in danger of the same. It was being restored at a body shop in California when the owner died, leaving it to sit rusting for years. The shop took possession of the vehicle and sold it to the Volo Auto Museum in Illinois.

08 The Vintage Racing Car (*Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*)

Chitty Chitty Bang Bang is a vintage racing car featured in the book, movie and stage production of the same name. For the film version, six cars were created, including a fully



functional road-going car built by Alan Mann Racing in Hertfordshire in 1967 and fitted with a Ford 3000 V6 engine. Actor Dick Van Dyke who drove the car in the movie said '...the car was a little difficult to manoeuvre, with the turning radius of a battleship'.

Other car props included a smaller version which appeared in only 12 seconds of the movie containing construction flaws which made its use impractical. A non-roadworthy transforming version was used to promote the stage musical and the hover car was a shell mounted on a speed boat, destroyed after filming. An engineless version was constructed for trailer work. The road version is on display at the National Motor Museum in Beaulieu. The car built for the British stage production is listed as the most expensive stage prop ever, built at a cost of £750,000.

07 The Ferrari California (*Ferris Bueller's Day Off*)

In the film *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*, Ferris convinces Cameron to borrow his father's rare 1961 Ferrari GT California. In filming the insert shots

were of the real 250 GT California, but only 100 of these cars were made so the cars used in the wide shots were reproductions, cheaper to destroy. The 'replicar' reproductions were universally hated by the crew, as they were unreliable. Rumour says





the scene where Ferris leaves the car with a garage attendant had to be shot a dozen times because the vehicle would not start.

At the time of filming, the original 250 GT California model was worth \$350,000. It has now become one of the most expensive cars sold, fetching \$10,976,000 at auction in 2008.

06 The Dodge Charger (*Dukes of Hazzard*)

The Dodge Charger from the American television series and subsequent movie *The Dukes of Hazzard* was dubbed the General Lee. Scores of orange Dodge Chargers were used in filming but most never survived their first televised escapade.

Lee I, the car that jumped over a Hazzard County police cruiser in the very first episode was a survivor despite not quite sticking the landing after flying 16 feet in the air over a distance of 82 feet, as seen in the opening credits of the series. Lee I was saved from destruction and restored over a period of 16 months. In 2012 the car was auctioned with the final sale price of a paltry \$121,000.

05 The Trans Am (*Knight Rider*)

KITT from the American television series *Knight Rider* which ran from

1982-1986 has limited movie credits but *Knight Rider 2000*, a 1991 sequel movie served as a television pilot for a new series. It did not sell. The original series starred David Hasselhoff fighting crime with the help of an artificially intelligent car. KITT was an electronic computer module installed in a well equipped robotic automobile. The original and best known KITT was a 1982 Pontiac Trans Am, and the second KITT was 2008-2009 Ford Shelby GT500KR.

KITT's special features included Turbo Boost that allowed bursts of speed, Self Automation so the car could drive itself, an Anamorphic Equaliser which was a front mounted scanner bar that allowed KITT to see and a Voice Synthesiser for communication. KITT was protected by body armour

portrayed to be invulnerable to diamond headed drills, high speed impact and small arms fire.

KITT's total production cost was estimated at \$11,400,000 in 1982. 23 cars were made for filming and all but one survived until the show was axed when 18 cars were destroyed. Of the remaining five, three are in the hands of private collectors in the US, one was sold to the former Cars of the Stars Motor Museum in Cumbria, and the fifth is believed to be in private hands in the UK.

04 The Mini Cooper (*The Italian Job*)

The Italian Job is often cited as the classic car-centric film, featuring fast chases and vehicular destruction with Lamborghini,



Aston Martin, Jaguar, Fiat, and of course Mini represented. As soon as you fall in love with the cars featured in the movie they invariably come to a terrible end. Explosions, crashes, being pushed off cliffs, it is all in there.



Possibly the least exotic of the hero cars are the trio of Mini Coopers in red, white, and blue that do the work of getaway cars. The stunts they perform are incredible in the literal sense of the word. It is somewhat ironic that compared to the luxury models in the movie, the original price of the Mini Cooper was a modest \$1,595.

03 The Aston Martin DB5 (*Goldfinger*)

Throughout the James Bond series of films Q Branch has given Bond a variety of vehicles. The Aston Martin DB5 is arguably the most memorable, thanks to Oscar winning special effects expert, John Stears, dubbed 'the Real Q', who created the DB5 in the 1964 movie *Goldfinger*:

The car used in the film was the original DB5 prototype, with another standard car for stunts. The first DB5 was stripped of its weaponry and gadgetry by Aston Martin and resold. It was then retrofitted by subsequent owners with non-original weaponry including pop out gun barrels behind the front indicators, a bullet shield behind the rear window and a three-way revolving number plate showing GOLD FINGER, JB007 or BMT216A. It was sold in 2010 for \$4.1m (£2.6m) to a car collector.

02 The VW Beetle (*The Love Bug*)

Herbie is an anthropomorphic 1963 Volkswagen Beetle featured in several Disney movies starting with the 1968



feature film *The Love Bug*. He has a mind of his own, drives himself, and competes in racing competitions. In order to create the effect of Herbie self-driving, Disney concocted an intricate system of sprockets and pulleys connected to a second steering column for a rear seat driver who sat low enough to see through the windscreen but out of the view of the camera.



The original cars in *The Love Bug* had the VW badges removed and featured plain hubcaps to avoid any trademark conflicts. After the success of the movie it was endorsed by Volkswagen who insisted that the VW logos appear so

the hub cap and hood-mounted logos were reinstated. Herbie set a Guinness World Record as the first car to go through the Panama Canal during filming in 1979.

01 The DeLorean (*Back to the Future*)

The DeLorean DMC-12 was manufactured for the American market in 1981-82 and a modified version became iconic as a time machine in the *Back to the Future* trilogy. In the movie the car engines were dubbed over with recorded V8 sounds.

Six DeLorean chassis were used during the production, along with one manufactured out of fibreglass for the flying scenes. One of the cars was destroyed at the end of *Back to the Future Part III*, two were left to rot, and the fibreglass replica was torn apart for scrap. Universal Studios owns two of the remaining cars and the last was extensively restored and resides in a private collection.

