

A Special 1932 Rockne Deluxe

Roadster

Model "65" w/Free Wheeling Transmission

Owner and article: Gary St. Amour

Photos: Rick Peterson

The story behind this car goes as such: In the March of 1931 Studebaker president Albert Erskine announced that his longtime friend, famed Norte Dame coach Knute Rockne had been appointed Sales Promotion Manager for the automaker. The plan had been to use Rockne's name and occasional appearances to promote a car named after him. It would be built by Studebaker's solely owned, new subsidiary, thus allowing the firm to enter the low priced market. Tragically just weeks after the announcement Coach Rockne was killed in a plane accident. The car was introduced in February of 1932 and on Easter weekend 1933 the Rockne plant in Detroit was closed and production ended, a victim of the depression.

My grandfather was a VP at Studebaker in the 1930's and when my mother went to college he gave her a new Rockne roadster to drive promote the new car. My folks loved the classics and over many years of car events mom always lamented how she wished that we would could find a Rockne roadster. I was into sports cars and so I never looked for a Rockne until a few years ago and then still could never find a roadster. Well a couple of years ago I was at the Gilmore Museum and came across this one. Wow was I surprised when I learned that the reason I could never find one was because of the low production numbers and the fact that the Studebaker/Rockne registry only knows of 7 roadsters left in the world! And of that 7 only 2 in the US, this obviously being one of them! So I tracked down the owner and after much deliberation was able to make a deal on the car.

My folks have long passed on but I am really happy to have this Rockne and show it in their honor.





Gary St Amour standing proudly with his newly purchased 1932 Rockne Roadster.



A side view of the 1932 Rockne "Model 65" Roadster with the top up.



The dash is very simple but has all the needed information the driver needs.



The interior was restored very nicely



Note the steps in the bumper and fender. Yes, it's rumble seat



Here is the trunk open showing the rumble seat



This Rockne was fitted with dual side mounts.



A front view of the very nice front grill.



The 1932 is powered by a 189.8 cubic inch 6 cylinder rated at 66 horsepower.