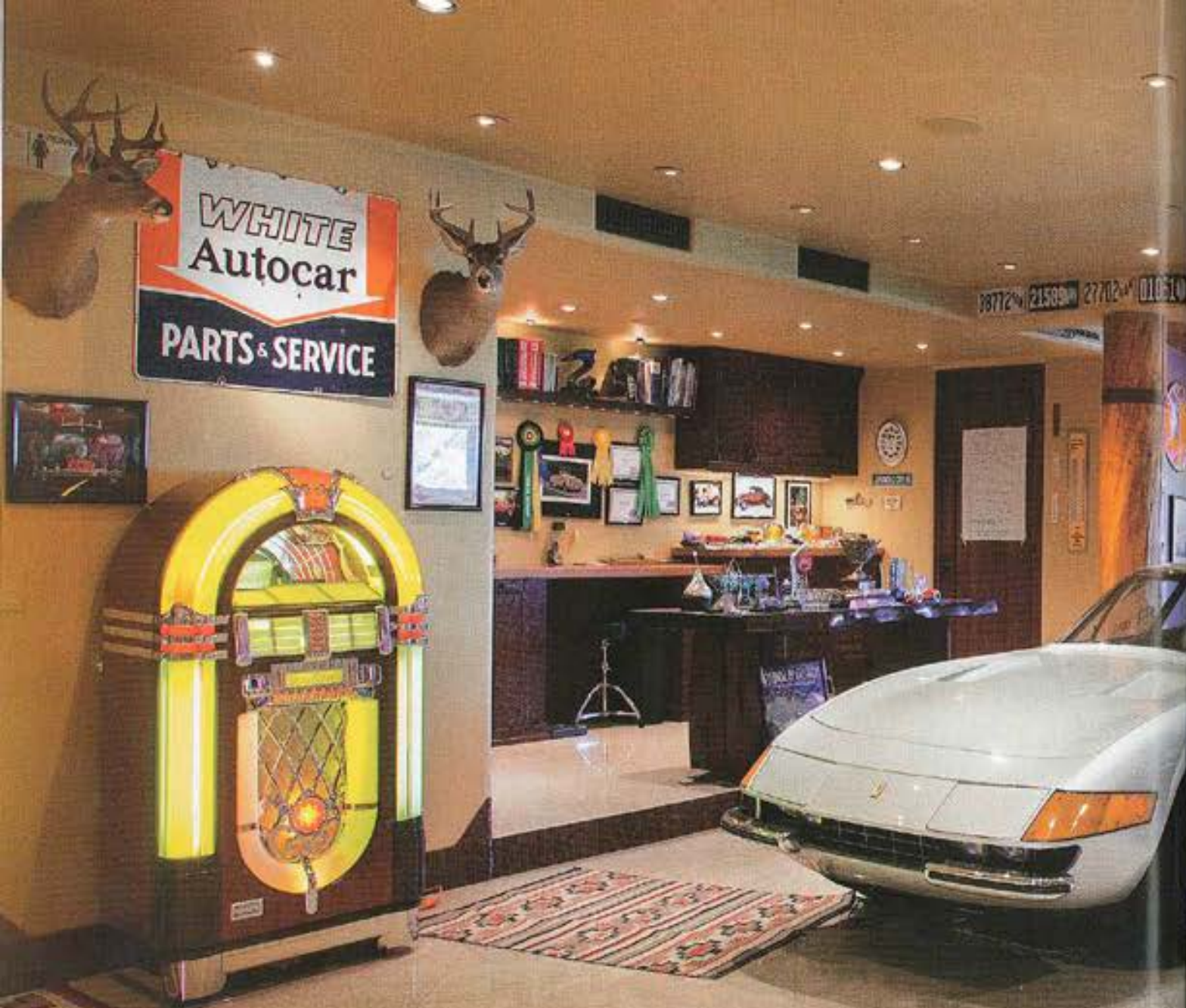


# PHOENIX HOME & GARDEN

## Authentic Arizona

Natural Beauty  
Rich Heritage  
*Exciting Design*

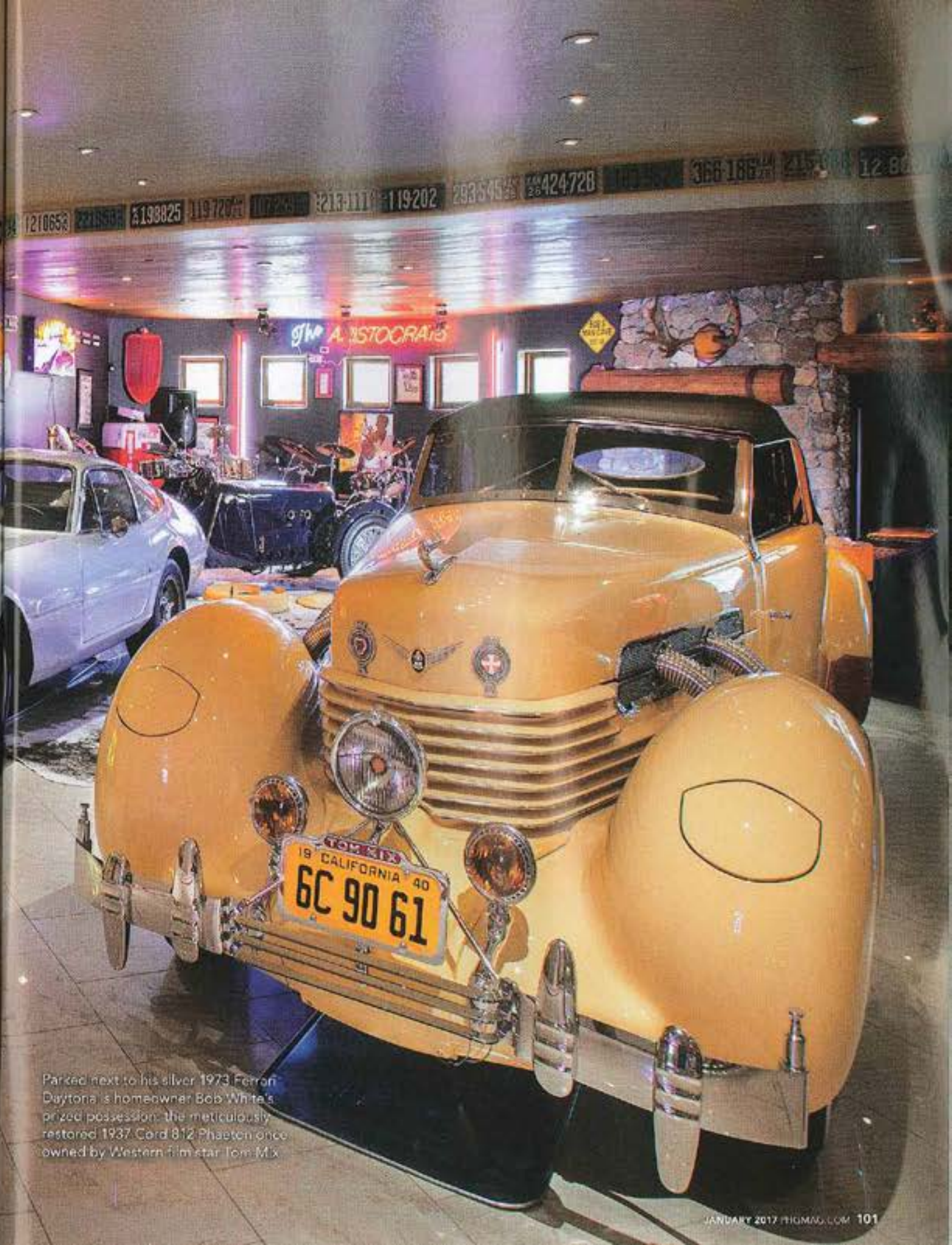




# MORE THAN JUST HORSEPOWER

*A Nostalgic Garage Packed Full of Western History and Heritage Is Iconic Arizona*

BY CARLY SCHOLL PHOTOGRAPHY BY MICHAEL WOODALL



Parked next to his silver 1973 Ferrari Daytona is homeowner Bob White's prized possession: the meticulously restored 1937 Cord 812 Phaeton once owned by Western film star Tom Mix.

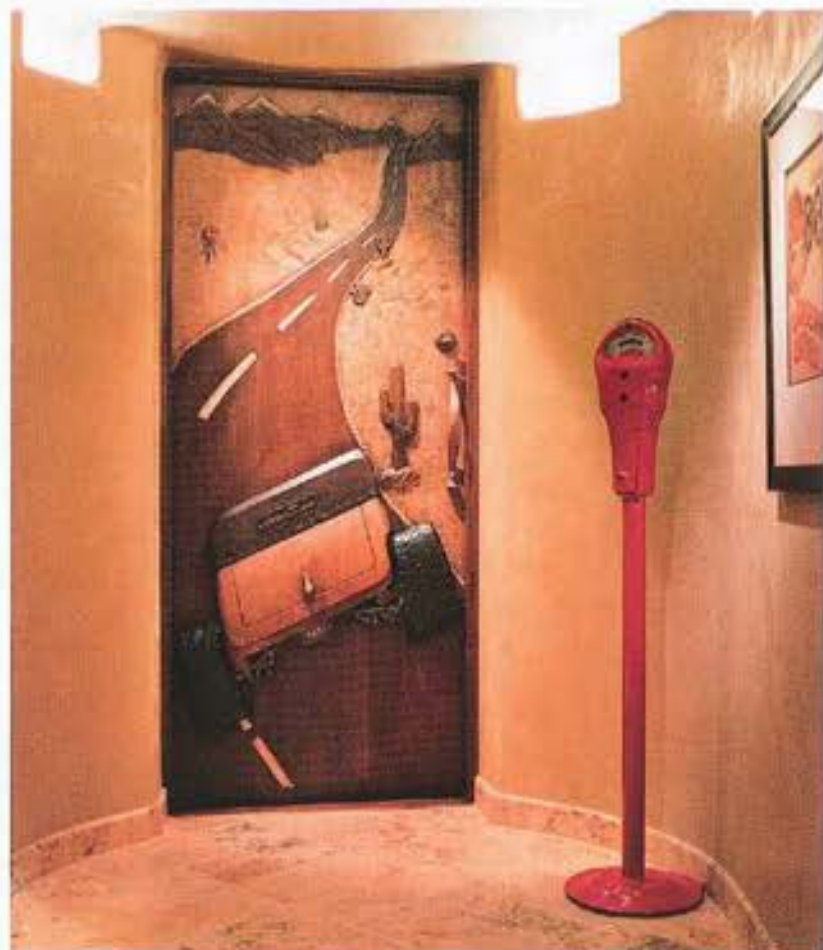
**WITH ITS MILD WEATHER AND MILES UPON** miles of scenic highway on which to cruise, the Southwest is a utopia for car collectors and enthusiasts alike. The desert's expansive sprawl also affords many homeowners the opportunity to build houses on roomy acres that can accommodate impressive garages for storing and displaying prized vehicles. While spacious two- and three-car units are fairly typical in Arizona, a fully furnished and decorated automobile showplace, such as the one Bob and Pat White included in their home's floorplan, is far more uncommon.

After retiring, the Whites packed up their Illinois home and set out to fulfill their manifest destiny: head west, to the land of cowboys, cacti and classic cars. They brought with them a long-time love of Western history and Native American culture, which inspired the multilevel Pueblo-style construction of their Scottsdale abode. Designed by architect and *Phoenix Home & Garden* Masters of the Southwest award winner Lee Hutchison, the home features a plethora of nooks, crannies, cabinets and niches created specifically to exhibit Bob's collection of Western and Native American artifacts. Further expanding on the couple's passion for collectibles rich with history is the 2,500-square-foot garage.

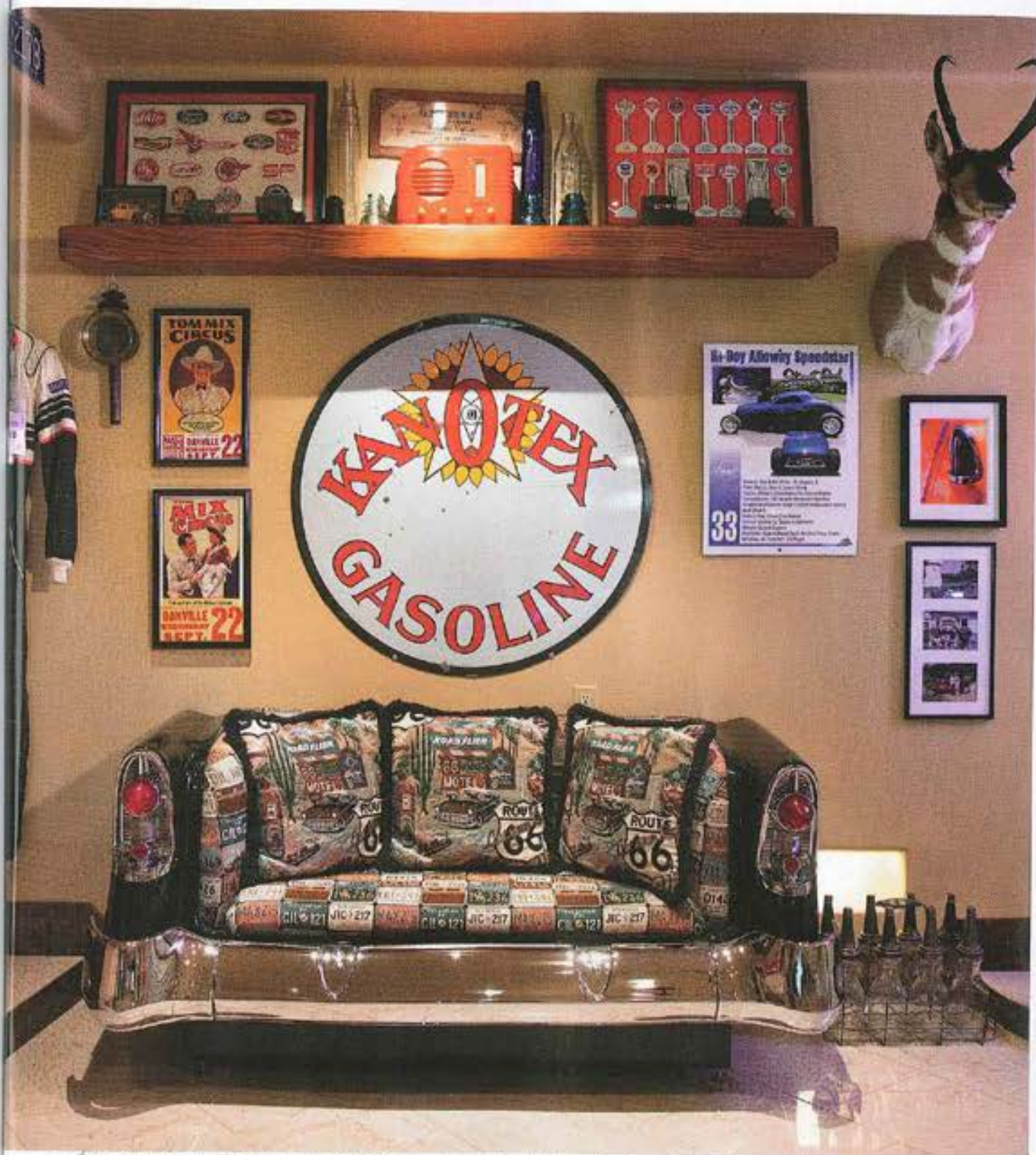
As part of the home's lower level, the Whites' garage has what Hutchison describes as a basementlike layout. "There are a few windows, but we purposefully designed this part of the house nearly underground because car storage doesn't need a lot of natural sunlight," he says. "The garage started out as simply a place for Bob's 10-car collection, but it became so much more than that." Like the rest of the house, the design scheme is a sort of homage to the Old West's glory days but with a twist of Americana via Route 66. "I like collecting cars that are meaningful to me and have a special story," says Bob. "The design of the garage reflects the historic car culture of the 1950s, '60s and '70s."

Continuing the nostalgic motif of the main house, Bob used the space to not only comfortably house his classic cars but to display a menagerie of memorabilia and vintage autocentric decor. The result is a seriously cool man cave filled with some of the many eclectic finds Bob has collected over the years, including a decommissioned parking meter, retro body shop signage, international license plates and a love seat nestled into the trunk of a 1956 Chevy, complete with a shiny chrome bumper and a pair of taillights. With such a fun array of furnishings, the garage takes on the quirky sensibility of a roadside stop.

Though the masculine retreat boasts amenities atypical of a traditional carport, including a cozy seating area around a fireplace and television, a bathroom sporting hot rod-inspired flame decor and even a bandstand where Bob can practice his drumming, the garage's main attraction is undoubtedly the parade of classic cars that rotates through



One of Bob's favorite cars in his collection is a 1933 Ford hot rod, the rear view of which he had carved into a wood door that leads to the hallway outside his garage.



Constructed from the back end of a 1956 Chevy, a love seat upholstered in Route 66-embazoned fabric is the perfect addition to this nostalgic space. Hanging to its left is a driving suit from Bob's days racing Spec Racer Fords around the country. Vintage circus posters from the 101 Ranch in Oklahoma adorn the walls.

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# WHITE ROSE

Bob and his wife, Pat, use these director's chairs when they travel to give presentations about the Tom Mix Cord. When not in use, the chairs form part of a memorial for the iconic actor, along with a bronze relief that originally hung in a Hollywood studio.



The design of the garage reflects the historic car culture of the 1950s, '60s and '70s.

—Bob White, homeowner

ABOVE: Painted by the same company that detailed one of Bob's hot rods with the classic flame design, the garage's powder room is decked out with fiery accents and stainless steel fixtures. See Sources.

the center stage. "As a storage space, the garage can hold about eight to 10 of my cars," explains Bob. "But as a showplace, it usually displays only six to seven at any given time." Of all his vintage hot rods and gleaming sports cars, including such favorites as a 1954 one-off Alfa Romeo, a 1964 Fiat with a Vignale body—one of only 10 made—and a 1927 Rolls Royce Phantom Piccadilly Roadster, one stands out among the rest: a rare canary-yellow 1937 Cord 812 Phaeton that has a particularly unique backstory special to the Southwest.

Western movie star Tom Mix, known around Hollywood during the silent film era as the "King of Cowboys," had a passion for fast, flashy cars, and shortly after his career ended in 1935, he bought a brand new Cord 812 convertible. Mix customized nearly every inch of the vehicle, adding Western details, including tooled, monogrammed leather stone guards and a holster attached to the steering column to hold his Smith & Wesson revolver.

On Oct. 12, 1940, the star was driving the souped-up single-seat roadster toward his ranch near Florence when he unexpectedly came across a washed-out bridge. He was unable to stop due to his high speed; the car overturned; an unsecured aluminum suitcase was launched from the package

shelf behind the driver's seat, striking the actor in the head and killing him.

Seventy years later, Bob acquired the legendary vehicle and funded a meticulous restoration, returning it to its former glory days when Mix sat behind the wheel. "We took it down to the last nut and bolt," says Bob. "For nearly two years, we did massive amounts of research to rediscover and reinstate every authentic detail of the original Cord." After devoting so much time, energy and effort to the restoration, Bob saw it fitting to write a book documenting this particular piece of Western history, entitled "The Tom Mix Cord: Saga of a Western Film Star's Classic Motorcar." He recalls, "I always knew this car was really special. But it wasn't until we restored it and took it to shows around the country that I realized so many people were truly interested in and impressed by it as well."

One of the more solemn features of the garage lies just a few steps away from the iconic car. A sort of shrine comprising two canvas director's chairs and a set of aluminum suitcases sits beneath a memorial bronze relief of the actor wearing his signature ten-gallon Stetson hat, a style that has come to be known as a "Tom Mix" these days. ■