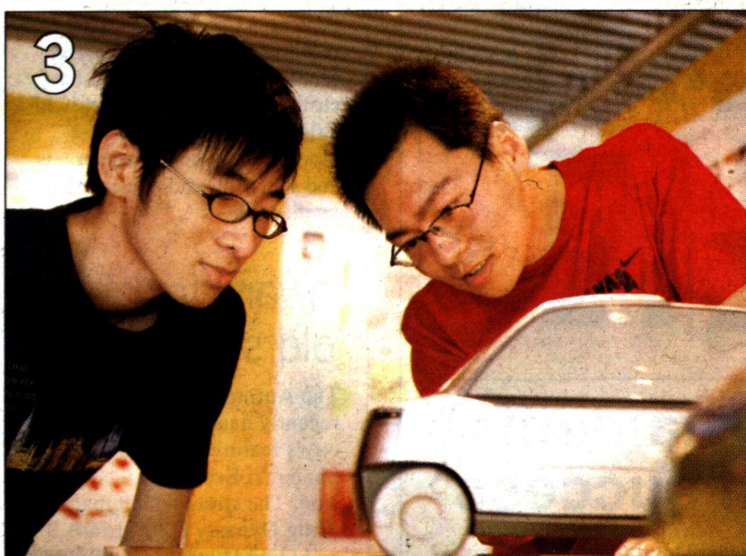




1. 1&6&7. Antique cars on display at the Shanghai Auto Museum.  
 2. Production line of Shanghai Volkswagen Co Ltd.  
 3. Tongji University students examine an auto model.  
 4. Visitors appreciate the new models at an auto fair.  
 5. A Formula One racing car which was driven by Kimi Raikkonen during his tenure at the McLaren Mercedes team.  
 6. Chunhui No.2, a hydrogen fuel cell hybrid electric vehicle designed by Tongji University



# Take a look at cars from past, present and future

Zhou Yang, Gu Xianhui and Fei Lai

The birth of the automobile in 1886 forever changed traditional modes of transport, ushering in a whole new era in which the automobile has become an experience of both culture and wonder.

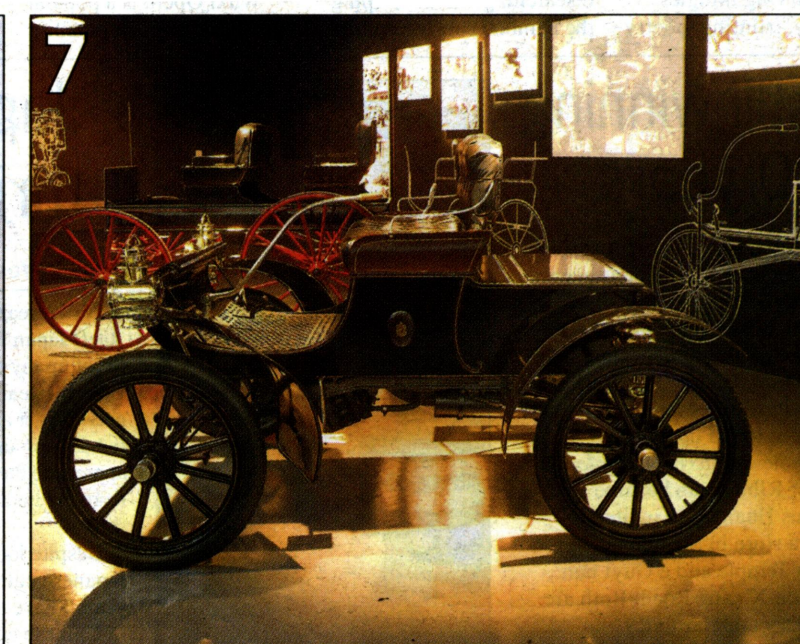
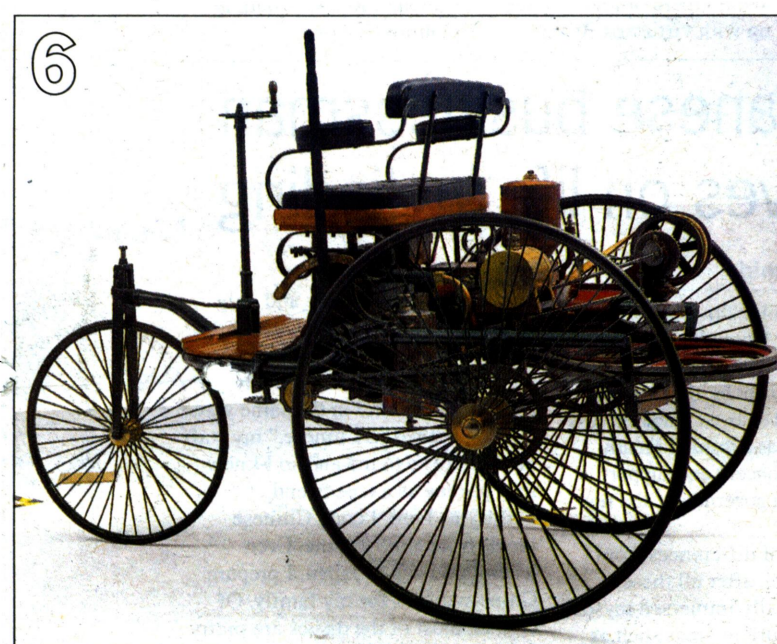
To those who like to browse car culture and history, Shanghai International Automobile City in Jiading District offers almost everything for an enthusiast from antique vehicles to Formula One race cars and advanced car research and development centers.

What did the world's first car look like? What is the most expensive antique car? What are the unknown stories behind famous car brands? The answers can easily be found at the Shanghai Auto Museum.

Established in the Shanghai International Automobile City last year, the museum is the first of its kind in China. Covering 20,000 square meters, its area for exhibitions reaches 10,000 square meters.

Almost 80 classic cars, constructed over the past 100 years, are on display at the Auto History Hall and Antique Car Hall.

The History Hall is divided into eight themes including preface, exploration and birth, application and production, streamline and speed, diversity and wonder, sports and driving, energy-saving and electron



and Chinese auto industry.

The Antique Car Hall features about 40 cars of 20 different brands built between 1900 and 1970 including Ferrari, Porsche, BMW, Jaguar, Alfa Romeo and Rolls-Royce.

While admiring the rapid development in automobile science and technology over the past century, people can also take a glance at cars today and in the future at the Shanghai International Automobile Center.

Located in the automobile city, Shanghai Volkswagen is one of the biggest manufacturing bases of modern cars domestically. Its annual

production reaches 450,000 with products including Santana, Passat, Polo, Gol, Touran and Octavia.

Featuring world-class manufacturing equipment, the company attracts foreign investment and utilizes modern technology to accelerate development.

Shanghai International Circuit, which has hosted the Shanghai Grand Prix five times, is famed for its design in the shape of the Chinese character *Shang*.

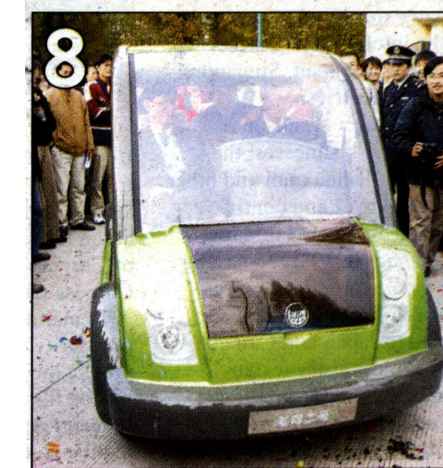
Besides exciting races, visitors can experience the track in person through trail drives and karts, while souvenirs, pubs, fan clubs and

forums add to the fun.

In September, 2004, the College of Automobiles of Tongji University moved to Shanghai International Automobile Center, injecting fresh energy to the site.

The opening of the Engineering Center for New Energy Vehicles, with a total investment of 400 million yuan (US\$58.4 million), marked the establishment of an important base where new energy vehicles can be developed.

Conception cars, designed at the college, are the biggest highlight. Young designers apply their imagination to creative car designs for student competitions.



## Driving the discovering of car culture

Chen Qianqing

The impact of the invention of the automobile on human society has been momentous.

As Ruan Jiewang, vice dean of the Automobile Culture and Race Research Institute of Tongji University, concluded after a culture tour of Shanghai International Automobile City recently: "It is a people-oriented humanistic relationship between humans and automobiles."

Every automobile around the world has its own culture. Therefore China also needs to find where its own uniqueness lies. "The ethnic characteristic of the Chinese automobile is our focus in automobile culture," says Ruan.

In the history of human civilization, creation always comes before action. Innovative ideas direct what we do to make them possible. Thus culture is the leading factor in development. It has already occurred to the designers at the Automobile City that the automobile industry is not merely about production but about the soul of cars, the spiritual drive of development.

After five years' construction, the Automobile City accomplished its initial shape of six functional sections. "It's time to integrate the single elements and present a rounded auto city," says Ruan.

He believes the soul of cars refers to the combination of speed, passion and ethnic features. The essential comprehensiveness of Shanghai International Automobile City differentiates it from other car cities, demonstrating its flawless multi-functional service.

"The young car city settling in the historic town of Anting, is just like a Chinese old man marrying a foreign girl," says Ruan. "Whether they can bear a healthy half-breed baby depends much on their ability to get along well in peace."

Between the two immensely different cultures, the government should serve as a guide as well as a lubricant, in order to establish a suitable platform for the two cultures to connect and mingle.

The Automobile City should consist of three wings — the documentary wing, the art wing and the lifestyle wing, an automobile culture association and an automobile culture study center.

The documentary wing mainly serves as a knowledge platform for innovation and research, whereas the art wing houses vehicle displays.

The lifestyle wing, based on cultural consumption, draws common people closer to the automobile industry. Specialists and scholars of the Automobile Culture Association can enjoy inspirational exchanges, passing on their thoughts to the citizens through the Automobile Culture Study Center.

"Such multi-functionality enables cultural differences to coexist in harmony and finally achieves unification among all sections," says Ruan.