

# THE TAILFINS OF CADILLAC

By Jeff Kinzler

The automotive tailfin was introduced by Cadillac in 1948 on its first, completely redesigned post-war cars. The tailfin became a predominant theme of automotive design in the 1950's soaring to outlandish proportions by the end of the decade. Automotive folklore has it that Chrysler's progressive "forward look" of 1957 upped the ante for long, low cars accented by jet-like fins. GM stylists responded with their 1959 line featuring all sorts of wing-like appendages, culminating in the enormous tailfins on the 1959 Cadillac. Tailfins changed only slightly until about 1955 when bladed twin bullets appeared on Eldorado coupes and convertibles. Then, they really took off. Here is a brief pictorial history showing how Cadillac raised its profile.



1951 Coupe DeVille



1952 Convertible



The first Eldorado in 1953



The all new 1954 Coupe



The 1955 Eldorado



1955 Coupe DeVille



1956 Fleetwood Sedan



1957 Eldorado



Another view of the 1957 Eldorado fin



1957 Sedan



1958 Fleetwood Sedan



1958 Detail

and...ultimately, the



1959 Hardtop Sedan DeVille



The P-38 Fighter that inspired the 1948 design



The first tailfin on the newly designed 1948 Cadillac



Tailfins on the first Coupe DeVille in 1949



1950 Sedan