

**1930 Stutz Series M**

This four-passenger dual-cowl speedster by LeBaron was previously owned by Captain Maharaj Sri Ranjitsinh of Baria, Gujarat.

**1934 Rolls-Royce 20/25**

This seven-passenger sedan was previously owned by Maharaja Sayajirao Gaekwad III of Baroda and Bollywood actress Mumtaz.

**1935 Buick, Series 90, Model 90L**

This car was once owned by Raja Saheb, Ayodhya. Only 191 of these limousines were produced in 1935.

**1952 Cadillac, Coupe de Ville, Series 62**

Previously owned by the Maharaja of Tehri Garhwal, this was Cadillac's Golden Anniversary model.

**1957 Chevrolet Bel Air**

This four-door Chevy was previously owned by the Maharaja of Tehri Garhwal. The classic has a dynamite V8 engine.

**1959 Cadillac Sedan de Ville**

This Cadillac was previously owned by Maharaja Gaj Singh of Jodhpur. It features the tallest tail fins in car production history.

In many ways, that set the ball rolling and Diljeet began to look around, keen to acquire more vintage cars.

"I began reading up all I could on the history and heritage of classic cars and even today, I enjoy spending time scouring libraries and book stores for books on the subject," he says.

"One day in 1999, I was sitting in the balcony of my house in Delhi when I saw a Hillman Minx being towed away. I literally ran down the road and asked about the owner's address and called him up. After a bit of haggling, the owner happily parted with it," says Diljeet, refusing to divulge how much he picked it up for.

"The idea to set up a museum came to me in 2003 when I had collected about seven cars," he says. Today his museum houses 82.

A team of five mechanics maintain the cars. "Most of the cars I purchase need a complete overhaul before putting them in the museum," he says. Restoration can cost anywhere between Rs200,000 and Rs700,000 (Dh13,788 to Dh48,270) depending on the condition of the car, he says.

Apart from vintage and classic cars, the 557-square-metre museum also houses some of Diljeet's SUVs, like the 4.2l turbo charged diesel Toyota Land Cruiser, Land Rover and Prado to name a few.

Big buyer to careful collector

During his first few years collecting, Diljeet used to buy almost every vintage or classic car that came his way, but over the years, he has become more picky.

"It's like an art collection, which needs to have rare and worthy pieces. The vehicles I now buy are those that are custom-built, have low mileage and documented provenance."

Diljeet's careful consideration before he makes his purchases explains why his collection is so varied and striking. Many of the cars in his

collection were owned by maharajas, including two Rolls-Royces, several historic Packards and Cadillacs, the only Stutz in the country, a Minerva, a Pierce Arrow and an Auburn.

One of Diljeet's personal favourites includes a 1930 Stutz. The 1952 Cadillac, Series 62, which was owned by the Maharaja of Barwani, in Madhya Pradesh, central India, and then by the Maharaja of Tehri Garhwal, in present day Uttarakhand, is another prized possession.

"This was Cadillac's Golden Anniversary model and was characterised by a distinct, higher rear deck lid contour," says Diljeet. Self-winding clocks came standard in the car.

"The 5422CC V8 engine produced 190hp and has power steering, which makes it a pleasure to drive. This model was referred to as 6237 DX."

Then there's the 1959 Cadillac Sedan de Ville, previously owned by Maharaja Gaj Singh of Jodhpur, Rajasthan.

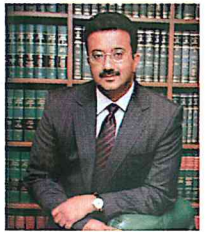
Its standard features included automatic transmission and power-steering, brakes, windows and locking. Also included were an air-conditioner, tape player and radio.

"No single automotive design better characterises the industry's late 1950s flamboyance than this Cadillac, which incorporated totally new styling," he says.

Diljeet also loves his 1935 Buick Series 90, Model-L, which was previously owned by Raja Saheb of Ayodhya. Only 191 of these seven-passenger limousines were produced in 1935.

Luckily, Diljeet's family - he married his childhood sweetheart, Anurita and the couple has two daughters Shekinah, 17, and Diyasannah, 15 - all share his love of cars.

Diljeet is constantly on the lookout for more cars. "Yes, apart from friends who sound me out on cars they have spotted I also keep a watch out from my balcony... just in case I find a vintage car." ■

**i INSIDE INFO**

Diljeet's cars have been used in several Bollywood movies including the hugely popular *Chashme Buddoor*, *Zubeida* and more recently, *Black*.