

# Pull up to the downtown car museum



*Troy Padgett at his personal car museum on East Church Street in Jasper.*

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Troy Padgett's garage in the heart of downtown Jasper has all the trappings of a garage, but could also very accurately be referred to as a museum. The rows of antique Model-As, Chevys, trucks, and gas pumps regularly catch the eye of motorists who pop in to see what's going on.

"We've had people here from all over," said Padgett, who has a map he marks to keep up with where his visitors are from including visitors from outside the US. "They want to know what I do here, that's the number one question I get – but it's a museum, it's not an actual business. My collection outgrew my space at home and I got run off the carport so I came here, and set things up to look like an old garage. If people see the garage doors open they can pull on in and look around, and I'd love to talk with them."

People will notice Padgett's collection is dominated by Model-As, which he fell in love with as a child, just like he did with cars in general.

"Cars have been a part of my life since I was a kid. A Model-A is what I learned to drive on when I was around 13 or 14 and I loved everything about it," he said. "They've got this



*Padgett's prize car, a Model-A wrecker.*

really special, unmistakable sound."

Padgett has six Model-As, most of which run and that you may very well see him tooting around in or driving for a local parade. He prefers the Model-A (produced from 1927 to 1931) over the Model-T (produced between 1908 and 1927) because it's easier to drive (the Model-T has three pedals that can be awkward).

"Model-Ts don't go fast at all," he said laughing. "They're not much better than a horse and buggy."

In total he's got around 25 vehicles, 15 of which are tagged and insured and can be driven and none of which are for sale.

"My kids can have a yard sale when I'm gone," he said laughing.

The oldest car on his lot is a 1926 Chevrolet that the first owner bought new at Lawson Chevrolet when it was in Nelson. He pieced it together after dragging it out of a thicket on someone's property. He's got a set of Corvettes (a '64 and '65, one that's his, one that's his wife's); a 1941 Ford, 50s-era Chevys and more. His favorite is a 1930 Model-A he modified into a wrecker and named Tater.

Most of the cars are lined up outside in front of the building, along with the vintage gas pumps and a colorful cornucopia of potted flowers and plants -- gardening is another hobby. Padgett keeps a close eye on the weather, and when rain is in the forecast he does the lengthy job of covering all of his cars with tarps.

Inside he's also got a bevy of other antiques and oddities visitors will want to check out – old boxcar racers, phone booths, vintage posters and old photos - too much to name, really.

"It's an addiction," he said. "I've always loved history and old things. They've always fascinated me."

If you want to take a gander and his collection, just pop in. He's located at 505 East Church Street in Jasper and would love to see you.



*Vintage gas pumps fill his lot to make it look like an old service station.*



*His oldest car, a 1926 Chevrolet purchased new in Jasper.*

