

FP-003

AUTOMOBILE BUILDING

The building you see before you is the enormously popular Automobile Building. It is here, during the State Fair of Texas, that car enthusiasts from all over the world come to see the newest vehicles being marketed by automobile manufacturers. As with most car shows, it is an extravaganza of gleaming chrome, pulsating lights and slowly rotating turntables featuring attractive spokespeople eager to sell you on the newest model for the road.

The show lasts only for the length of the State Fair -- about three weeks. Yet it is one of Fair Park's most attended events year-round. In 1998, the Chevrolet exhibit alone was so popular, the company had to replace the leather seats in its display Corvettes because of the wear and tear they received.

When the State Fair is not in operation, you can rent this building for special events. Visit the City of Dallas offices inside the Tower Building - or dallascityhall.com -- for details.

The Automobile Building may appear to have arisen at the same time as the other buildings around it, most of which were constructed for the 1936 Texas Centennial Exposition. But it was actually constructed in 1948 to replace the park's original Automobile Building and Electrical and Communications Buildings. Those buildings burned to the ground at the same time in 1942.

For many years, the replacement building bore a completely different architecture from the one on the other side of the reflecting basin. The City of Dallas corrected this imbalance in 1985 when it added matching porticoes to this building.

Although the original building is gone, the three monumental statues along the front -- commissioned from artist Raoul Jossset for the 1936 Texas Centennial Exposition -- live on. These statues -- along with the three across the reflecting basin -- symbolize the six governments whose flags have flown over Texas at some point.

Also commissioned in 1936 for the buildings around the Esplanade were a series of grand murals executed by Bourdelle and Carlo Ciampaglia. The murals paid tribute to the workers of Texas and represented Art Deco styling at its finest. Although the murals on the building across the reflecting basin are originals, these are replicas, created in 1999 by the EverGreene Painting Studios of New York City. They are inspired by photographs of the originals, which were destroyed when the original building burned to the ground.