

Driving a Car on Ol' Man River



Stafford L. (Casey) Lambert, flyer, sportsman, engineering company head and collector of planes, cars and boats, prepares to take a spin and cruise in his amphibious car that operates on water as well as on land.



Sportsman 'Casey' Lambert, who once flew under and over Eads Bridge, shows off his latest vehicle, an auto-boat that rides the waves

By NELL GROSS Photos by ROY COOK

It is only half the size of his town car and not nearly as impressive as his 58-foot yacht, but Stafford L. (Casey) Lambert's new amphibious automobile gets a lot more attention than either because it does what both the car and the boat can do.

When he drove it off the levee into the Mississippi River on a recent windy afternoon, heads turned, mouths gaped and eyes widened with incredulity.

Creating this kind of reaction is old stuff for Casey. He has been doing it for years. People gasped with astonishment some time ago when he flew his plane under Eads Bridge, looped over the top and zoomed under it again. And Sunset Hill Country Club golfers will never forget the day when he parachuted to the links after his plane broke up in the air.

Flyer, sportsman, artist, underwater explorer and head of an engineering firm, Casey loves gadgets and mechanical things. If it

is on the market, he buys it. If it is not, he invents it.

When he wanted to shoot pictures of underwater life he built a camera, bought a diving suit and took off for Cuba with a seaplane and an 85-foot schooner. His newest seaplane (which he developed) smashed altitude records for a plane its size when it climbed to 13,000 feet. And a photo-reconnaissance system he developed 14 years ago for tracking submarines is still being produced at his plant at Macklind and Berthold avenues for the Air Force and the Navy.

Planes and cameras rate high among his hobbies. Casey was flying at the age of 16, alongside Charles A. Lindbergh, a protege of his uncle Albert Bond Lambert for whom St. Louis' airport is named. Casey bought his first plane at 18 out of the estate he inherited from his father, Marion J. L. Lambert, a pharmaceutical company executive. Since then he has owned a total of 27 planes (four at one time was tops).

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He also loves cars and boats. So the prospect of owning a convertible that could take the place of both proved irresistible to him. After his first ride in an Amphicar owned by a friend, Casey picked up the telephone and bought one.

Now he is having great fun with it on St. Louis streets and rivers before he takes it to his summer place at Lake Minocqua, Wis.

On a recent afternoon following lunch with some friends from the foreign consulates here (Casey is the Belgian consul) Amphicar-owner Lambert took Nicaraguan vice consul Leo Lewis and British vice consul Frank Taylor for a spin and a boat ride.

The three drove down the Third Street Interregional Expressway at a leisurely pace (although the four-cylinder, 43-horsepower motor can do 75 miles per hour on land and about 13 knots on the water). Then Casey nosed the car off the highway, down the levee and straight into the Mississippi River.

Muddy waves rocked the 2200-pound welded steel auto as it bobbed and dipped and settled down to its normal two-foot draught. Then Casey shifted the transmission into neutral and engaged a second transmission that operates the boat.

Twin propellers under the rear engine roared and churned. The car gave a lurch, turned upstream and labored grimly against

Roaring off the levee into the Mississippi River, Casey Lambert prepares to drive under Eads Bridge.

Action startled spectators, as did one of his earlier feats—looping under and over the bridge in a plane.

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the sweeping current.

Coming alongside motorboats moored at a floating dock, Casey turned the steering wheel to guide the front wheels that take the place of rudders. Then he pulled the auto-boat into slow reverse, spun around and headed toward the levee. Turtle-like, the Amphicar crawled up the cobblestones, rear propellers whirling.

"Most seaworthy car I've ever had," he quipped. "And it's the only one that comes with a bilge pump."

It is also the only car that comes with navigational lights; in the front are red and green running lights, in the rear a white stern light. Added equipment includes (at Coast Guard order) four life-jackets, an anchor and a fire extinguisher.

While he is still having fun on the water in his German-import compact, Casey admits interest in another new conveyance that has figured recently in the news. He is thinking of getting a one-man submarine.



Casey grips steering wheel that guides front wheels which operate as rudders. Circular object mounted on hood resembles siren but houses horn and serves as gasoline tank vent.



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