

The Cadillac Ranch

The Cadillac ranch was unveiled on June 21st, 1974 just outside of the town of Amarillo, Texas. It is a piece of modern art consisting of 10 Cadillac cars dated from 1949 until 1963:

Cadillac Club Coupe from 1949
Cadillac Coupe De Ville from 1954
Cadillac Sedan from 1957
Cadillac Coupe from 1959
Cadillac 4 window Sedan from 1962

Cadillac Sedan from 1950
Cadillac Sedan from 1956
Cadillac Sedan from 1958
Cadillac Sedan (flat top) from 1960
Cadillac Sedan from 1963

The idea was to show the rise and fall of the might tail-fin on the Cadillacs from those years. They are buried in sequence from old to new, nose down, in the ground under the same angle as that of the sides of the great pyramid of Giza, Egypt.

The piece of art was commissioned by Stanley Marsh the 3rd, a wealthy man from Amarillo with a weird taste for art. It was created by 3 members of the art group called the 'Ant farm': Chip Lord, Doug Michels and Hudson Marquez.



From left to right Hudson Marquez, Stanley Marsh 3, Chip Lord and Doug Michels.

The guys from the Ant farm went to Amarillo in May 1974 to buy the Cadillacs. For this they visited car dealers in and around Amarillo and the first car they bought was a Coupe De Ville from 1959 for a mere \$100. The car was that cheap since it did not have any paperwork.

Then they bought a crème colored Sedan de Ville from 1962. This car ran so well it hurt to bury it. A man sold them a silver colored Fastback from 1949 for \$700. A lot of money since the others cost on average around \$200. Stanley told them to buy the car but before the previous owner left he told them to smash in the windows. The guys did that much to the consternation of the previous owner.



The last car purchased was the first car buried. Here Doug Michels of Ant Farm, the group of California artists that created the project, seals the deal on the 1949 model in an alley in northeast Amarillo.



It took them 2 weeks go get the required 10 cars (plus 1 spare) and on Monday may 29th they went to Stanley's plot of land with a rented excavator. The operator did not really understand why they wanted him to dig holes and shove the cars in face down but he did so anyway.

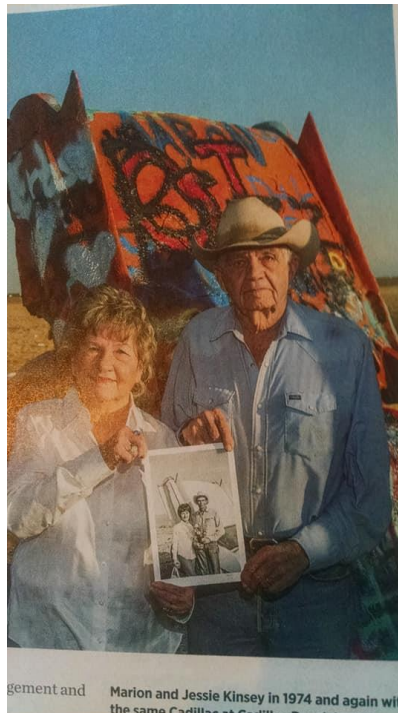
Meanwhile the Ant farm guys and Stanley stood there, drinking beer and munching sandwiches. Stanley asked them very specifically not to talk with any of the journalists milling around.



The guy in this picture is an Englishman called Roger Dainton. He was in Amarillo at that time and became a temporary member the Ant Farm and helped burying the cars.



Marion & Jessie Kinsey pose in 1974 in front of one of the cars during the opening ceremony



gement and Marion and Jessie Kinsey in 1974 and again with the same Cadillac at Cadillac Desert

Marion and Jessie in 2018 in front of the same car.

When the work was done Stanley invited 200 VIP's from Amarillo for the opening celebration during which the alcohol flowed freely. A bottle of Champaign was smashed on the first car and the piece of art was officially opened.



The completed Cadillac Ranch in 1976, well before the graffiti started showing up.

Some pictures from the years between 1976 and 1990's





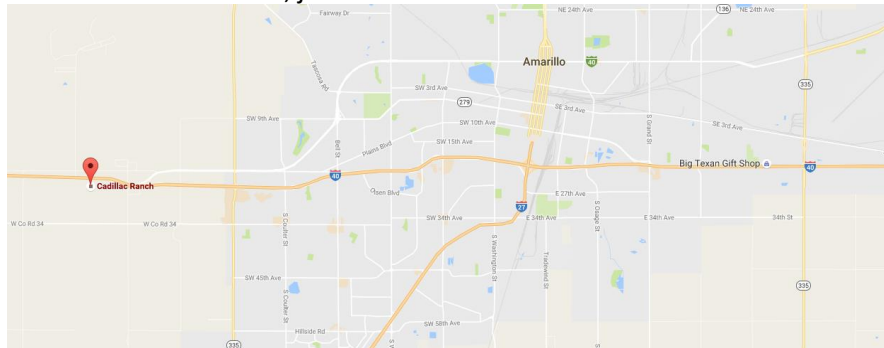
In 1997 Amarillo had grown so much that the cars were under threat so it was decided to move them two miles out west.



In the 90's Stanley Marsh 3 as accused of sexual misconduct and harassment of teens. The cases were all settled out of court. However, in 2013 he was charged again with comparable allegations which caused a number of people from Amarillo to demand the Cadillac Ranch be demolished as otherwise it would be a monument to a criminal. Luckily the Cadillac Ranch had then already changed ownership. Stanley Marsh's legacy does not only consist of the Cadillac Ranch but he also left a number of scholarships and donated land to a school. The Cadillac Ranch lives on, both in movies like the movie Cars where it is recognizable in the mountain range behind Radiator Springs.



Of course it can still be seen in real life, just outside of Amarillo:



And of course, it would not be America if people did not reproduce the Cadillac Ranch. There are a number of them spread around the country but a few mentionables:

Henry's Rabbit Ranch in Staunton, IL



The bug ranch in Conway, Texas



And the Combine Harvester Ranch, south of Amarillo:

