

## Designing man: cars, colas, cafes, oh my

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by Aileen Jacobson - On the Isle

A 1954 baby blue Studebaker Champion, still looking as sleek as the day Raymond Loewy designed it, sits at the center of a new exhibit at the Long Island Museum in Stony Brook.

Raymond who? That's what many people might ask as they enter "Raymond Loewy: Designs for a Consumer Culture." Which shows that even making the cover of Time magazine - in 1949 - does not guarantee pop culture immortality.

By the end of the exhibit, though, it's clear what an effect Loewy (1893-1986) had on the world as we see it. From the Lucky Strike cigarette package to the familiar logos of such brands as Nabisco and Shell, from a sharp-edged broiler-rotisserie to a curved Coca-Cola fountain, Loewy helped define the streamlined shapes of modern design.

"The breadth of what he did was amazing," Joshua Ruff, the museum's history curator, says as he gives a preopening exhibit tour. Loewy designed trains, planes and automobiles, including the Avanti, a model Ian Fleming admired so much he had James Bond drive one in "Diamonds Are Forever." The Champion, the only local part of this traveling exhibit, was driven into the museum by its owner, Tom Portesy of Selden.

Loewy's company also designed the Manhasset Lord & Taylor, a now-defunct cafe in Penn Station and the Leisurama Project in Montauk, vacation homes that were sold from Macy's catalogs in the 1960s.

Catalog living was not for Loewy, though. He owned glamorous homes in Sands Point (which can be seen in a video), Manhattan, Mexico, Palm Springs and France, where he was born. "If he lived well, he would be covered by national magazines," Ruff says. Loewy helped invent consumer society.

Raymond Loewy exhibit through May 21, Long Island Museum of American Art, History & Carriages, 1200 Route 25A, Stony Brook, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Wednesday-Saturday, noon-5 p.m. Sunday, \$7 adults, \$6 seniors, \$3 ages 6-17, free younger than 6. April 29 symposium, "Raymond Loewy and Modern Design on Long Island"; 631-751-0066 or [www.longislandmuseum.org](http://www.longislandmuseum.org).

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