



Inside Hyde Park

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Sign Me Up!

written by **Paul Wentz**, editor *Inside Hyde Park* and HP homeowner

Hydre Park homeowner Jim Smith's first car was a 1932 Ford coupe. At 14, he was not old enough to drive it, but the car taught him a lot. Already a car enthusiast, the coupe provided a hands-on learning experience. Two years later, behind the wheel of a now exceptionally familiar vehicle, he drove his coupe with a fresh driver license in his wallet.

Hot rods would be a life-long passion, first as a hobby, then as a career. For several years, Jim was an independent insurance broker. Though his profession provided excellent support for his family, it did not satisfy his need and desire to spend his time working with his hands restoring, maintaining, and crafting hot rods, exotics (like Lamborghinis and Lancias), muscle cars (like the Pontiac GTO and the Plymouth Barracuda), and other unique and special vehicles of certain eras ('30s, '40s, and '50s for hot rod models and '60s and '70s for muscle cars).

His desire became a reality when his son, Jason, at the time a recent graduate of OSU Tech, unexpectedly asked his dad, "What do you think about opening a shop?" During my interview with Jim, he said, "I didn't even think about it. I said sign me up." So in 1997, father and son opened the Hot Rod Garage in Sand Springs, Oklahoma. Because of their involvement in cars nationally, the two were already known in the trade. No advertisement was needed. Projects appeared unsolicited. Over time, the business expanded from one building to four, one for fabrication, and the others for bodywork, paint, and final assembly.

Though now retired, Jim is no stranger to the shop that his son now operates. About once a week, you can find Jim at the Hot Rod Garage. When not visiting the shop, you might find Jim and his wife Sharon enjoying a ride in their restored four-speed 1929 Ford roadster. If that were not enough, you might spot them on a road trip in their 1947 Ford Sedan Delivery with its Chevy 350, 300 horsepower engine.

Because of his passion for these special cars, Jim and Sharon have attended or participated in auto events, shows, and competitions across the United States, winning their share of awards and making lasting friendships. **HP**



Jim's first car: 1932 Ford Coupe



On the road to Memphis in their '34 Ford Sedan in '75 or '76



Hot Rod Garage Team

Sharon seated; Jim and Jason standing behind Sharon

Faith and Family

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Itinerary Sample

- Arrive Ben Gurion Airport
- Tamar region
- Amatziah National Park
- Lookout point of Jordan
- Dead Sea
- Kibbutz
- Masada
- Jerusalem
- Old Jerusalem
- Wailing Wall
- Yad Veshem
- Caesarea
- Haifa
- Bahai Gardens
- Tiberius
- Safed
- Tel Aviv

If you were to ask Hyde Park homeowner Terri Stidham what prompted her to join a tour of Israel, the answer might be both faith and family. Terri was raised Jewish. Her grandparents were Jewish immigrants from Russia. She has a photo of her father at the “Wailing Wall,” also known as the Western Wall in Old Jerusalem. Terri’s daughter, who had already experienced a profound trip to the motherland, told her, “Mom, you have to go to Israel.”

So, since a trip to Israel was still not checked off her bucket list and since Terri, though young at heart, was not getting any younger, she signed up for the Tulsa “Temple Israel” tour of Israel. The eighteen participants left Tulsa for Chicago and onward to Tel Aviv on March 26, 2022. The group returned to Tulsa on April 6. The days in between were filled with exciting excursions.

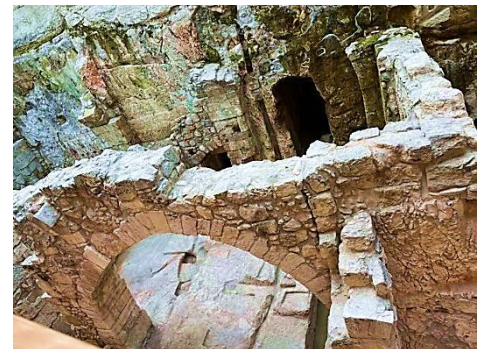
On March 30, Terri experienced the Wailing Wall as her father did so many years before. Though men and women must approach the Wall at different locations, all Jews can experience the Wall. As I understand it, the Western Wall represents continuity of the Jewish faith and its people. Going back over 2,000 years, it is the remains of the original wall that surrounded the Second Temple. When touching the Wall, one touches the past and the present of Judaism. It also represents the hope for the future of the faith.

Though the present and future are not without issues needing resolutions, there is some reason to be optimistic. As Terri pointed out during our interview, “When the Jews and Arabs live side-by-side, there is no problem.” Here in the States, the news of the Middle East and specifically Israel is typically bleak. Israel is an ongoing experiment in cohabitation. The future is not certain, but Terri’s experience represents a positive outcome. Her visit, her story gives us some reason to be optimistic.

Terri finally experienced her motherland. She looked behind the curtain and experienced the real Israel, not simply the country reported in the news. **HP**



Western Wall, aka, Wailing Wall



Old Jerusalem



Bahai Gardens



Model of Masada