

Imperial 1955

A luxury brand born to stand alone

The name “Imperial” had appeared under Chrysler since 1926, but it wasn’t until 1955 that it became a standalone luxury brand—a bold move to rival Ford’s Lincoln and GM’s Cadillac. For the next 20 years, Imperial stood at the top of Chrysler’s offering.

And most of the brand’s unforgettable style? That was thanks to just two men: Elwood Engel and Virgil Exner.

This particular car is the work of Virgil Exner. Before joining Chrysler, he’d already made waves in the design world with his Forward Look—a visionary approach that fused aerodynamics and elegance, sculpture and speed. And in 1955, it turned heads.

This specific car came to us from the quaint town of Etna, California, known for its Italian heritage. The former owner even sent us a photo—he’s standing proudly beside the car, which nearly towers over him with its grand roofline.

And the tech? Unbelievable for its time:

- Full electric controls
- 6-way adjustable front seats
- Dual-zone air conditioning—in 1955!

And that soft, dusty-pink paint? It’s an official Imperial color, charmingly named Desert Rose. A rolling piece of art—and a statement of what luxury once looked like.