

MOTOR TREND



Celebrity Drive: Oakland Raiders Star Robert Gallery

When He's Not on the Field, Gallery Tends to His Collection of American Iron

By K.S. Wang

Quick stats: Robert Gallery Oakland Raiders

Daily drivers: 1966 Lincoln Continental (Robert's rating: 6 on a scale of 1 to 10), [2009 Ford F-250](#) (rating: 10)

Other cars: 1966 [Lincoln Continental](#) convertible (rating: 7), 1955 [Ford](#) F-100 pickup (rating: 8), 1954 [Cadillac Coupe](#) Deville (rating: 11)

Favorite road trip: Highway 1 from San Francisco to Santa Barbara

Car he learned to drive in: 1984 [Ford F-150](#)

First car bought: 1984 [Buick](#) LeSabre

When he is not on the football field, Oakland Raiders' left guard Robert Gallery is either tinkering with his classic [cars](#) or entering them in car shows around California.

Gallery is from America's heartland, so when he buys a new set of wheels, it is always American. At 6 ft 7, his daily driver is either the 2009 [Ford F-250](#) or the 1966 Lincoln Continental with suicide doors.

2009 Ford [F-250](#)

Rating: 10

Gallery bought a [2004 Avalanche](#) right before he became the second pick in the 2004 NFL Draft, after Eli Manning, but he sold that to buy the F-250. While it's great for hauling things around, he particularly loves the roominess. "For me, it's the room inside for a big guy, just the comfort level in those is beyond anything I've ever ridden," Gallery points out. "A guy my size can sit behind me when I'm driving and have kneeroom, and I've never owned a [vehicle](#) like that. Overall, it's awesome."



It's also the [truck](#) Gallery uses to chauffeur his [Raider](#) teammates when they want to grab a bite to eat after a workout. "We can pile three guys in the back, two in the front buckets, and it's comfortable, whereas you can't do that in any other [car](#) I've owned."

1955 Ford F-100

Rating: 8

Gallery bought this pickup two years ago, in yet another vehicle that transports him back in time -- and back to when people drove without power steering. Almost everything is original, except it has a larger engine, a 351 Windsor. The automatic tranny is a modern floor shifter, instead of a three-on-a-tree. "I put different wheels on it, but it's pretty much a stock truck besides the engine, so it's got no power steering, replica-original steering wheel, original frame and drum brakes. I found it cheap. It was exactly what I wanted -- a stock appearance and stock drivetrain."



Growing up on a farm in Iowa, Gallery is used to driving a truck without power steering. "It's different out here in freeway traffic and moving around parking lots, but that was the cool factor of it," he says. "It's like it was back in the day when it was made. It's a cool cruising truck to take out to dinner and cruise down the coast in the summer."

1966 Lincoln Continental

Rating: 6

The [Lincoln Continental](#) was the first [car](#) Gallery bought after his first year with the Raiders. "The suicide-door Lincoln has always been my favorite car," he says. "I was looking for a convertible and I found that hardtop first for a cheap price out here and in good shape."



The Lincoln Continental is also big enough for Gallery. "They're so big inside you can feel comfortable. With the suicide door, you can get in easily and there's plenty room for big guys."

Gallery had the engine and tranny rebuilt, but it still has its original interior. "I [drive](#) it so much that, if I get a ding, I'm not really worried about it. It's fun, it's original, something I can just jump in and go. I put air-ride suspension on it, so I can lower it way to the ground. So it's got a cool looking profile. It's probably an inch and a half off the ground when I have the suspension lowered all the way."

Gallery lowered two of his [cars](#) to make them more eye-catching on the road. "If you have the stance lower, it gives them a totally different look - from a grandma car to a slick, slick looking car that fits my personality."

1966 Lincoln Continental convertible

Rating: 7

A few months after Gallery bought the Lincoln Continental [hardtop](#), he found this convertible. Aside from redoing the suspension, engine, and transmission and adding the new top, this ride pretty much looks the way it did in 1966.



"It's got the original interior, which is in immaculate shape as far as the seats," Gallery says. "It's not a super cherry, cherry car, but it's very functional. It's a great cruiser, something you can jump in everyday and not worry about getting a ding on. As far as comfort and cool factor, it's definitely up there."



Gallery loves driving the convertible in the summer. Since Bay Area weather is pretty mild, he'll often take it to work and then drive teammates to eat afterward. "If we're going out to get a bite to eat, I'll drive them. I drive them a lot," he says.

1954 Cadillac Coupe deVille

Rating: 11

Gallery purchased this swanky set of wheels a year and a half ago and lowered it as he did his Lincoln Continental hardtop. He rates this winner an 11 on a scale of 10, having completely redone it, customizing it with the help of his friends at Lucky 7 Customs in nearby Antioch.



"It's really a cherry, cherry car," Gallery says. "There's a ton of custom work done to it, that, if you're not a Cadillac person you wouldn't know. It's got custom bumper tips, a lot of custom trim, the front grille -- they hand sanded the curve in it. When you chop the top, it gives it more of a sleek look, because those [cars](#) originally had more of a bubble top. We chopped two and half inches in the front and four in the back and then lowered it, which really makes it look long and sleek."

Gallery proudly shows it off at Bay Area [car](#) shows as well as at the Grand National [Roadster](#) show in Pomona. Some of the awards this glorious Cadillac has won include the "Outstanding Paint" award, "West Coast Kustoms" award, and the "World's Most Beautiful Custom Runner Up" at the 2009 Sacramento Autorama and a "Course D'Elegance" award at the 2009 San Francisco Rod, Custom and Motorcycle Show. "You can enter lot of shows out here and park the car and hang out for the day and look at all the cars," Gallery says.

1949 Chevy [Suburban](#)

Gallery likes to tinker with little things on his cars, like replacing the window motors, but he is actively looking for parts for his 1949 Chevy Suburban, which is a work in progress. "I'm stripping it down and doing all the bodywork, replacing the panels," he says. "I'm slowly learning to do that myself. It's a way to get your mind off other things, and the finished product is something you did yourself. It's meditative and it's fun. I just enjoy the whole classic-car scene."



Car he learned to drive in

Although he now lives 20 minutes outside of Oakland, Gallery was born and raised near Masonville, Iowa, and lived on a family farm. That means he first learned to [drive](#) on a tractor at around 13 years old and then easily drove the family work truck, a 1984 [Ford F-150](#).

"Once I learned to use a clutch when we learned to drive tractors, it carried over to driving the car with a clutch, so it was pretty easy," he says. Gallery never got to drive on the road until he got his license, but he often drove around the farm. His parents still farm, they have 800 acres of corn and soybeans.

Gallery grew up submersed in American car culture and the family owned 1970s [Ford](#) LTDs and Thunderbirds, which were the cars they drove to high school.



First car bought

Gallery's parents bought a maroon 1984 [Buick](#) LeSabre for Gallery and his sister and brothers to drive during college. When he graduated from the University of Iowa, Gallery bought it from them. "I drove it up until it died on me last year," Gallery says. "I drove it a lot my first two years in the NFL."



Favorite road trip

Although workout starts in the middle of March, NFL players get the month of July off before training camp. Gallery especially likes to get on the road in one of the cars in his fleet during July, in addition to any free time throughout the year.

He enjoys driving down the coast of California on Highway 1 through Carmel to Santa Barbara. "It's a cool road trip," he says. "Sometimes there's a great area to stop on the beach and hang out in all those towns."

He also likes the drive to Lake [Tahoe](#). "I go up to the lake and hang out at Lake Tahoe for a weekend," he says. "It's just a fun spot, especially in the summer, to go cruise and hang out for a couple days."

Automakers

Especially in this economic climate, Gallery supports American manufacturers. "That's all I'm a supporter of," he emphasizes. "I'm a big American-made guy. Anything American is good. That's all I'll ever buy is American-made."



Gallery hopes the situation gets better, because America needs its automakers. "I think everybody in the car industry got greedy in the good years, now when things are going bad, it's catastrophic because things were so good," he says. "I'm hoping it'll get fixed. No matter what happens they need to do what they can to keep those American car companies going. We need a lot of jobs for American people and the American-made thing has to keep going, so whatever must be done needs to get fixed and continue."

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