

by Leland F. Powels

Thelma Alice Todd (July 29, 1906 – December 16, 1935) born in Lawrence, Massachusetts was an American actress appearing in approximately 120 pictures between 1926 and 1935. She Co-starred with many movie greats such as Laurel and Hardy, The Marx Brothers and Buster Keaton. She also starred in the 1931 film version of The Maltese Falcon starring Ricardo Cortez as Sam Spade. She received her 1932 KB Lincoln from the Maddux dealership. This photo was taken on the day of delivery. Her expression of delight over this automobile is genuine. She really loved her car.



Thelma in "The Bohemian Girl" 1935.



Thelma and Groucho Marx



Thelma smiling in a publicity photo



*Thelma Todd's Sidewalk Café in its heyday.
On the right: Postcards of the lavish interior of the restaurant*



In 1934, Thelma got into an accident with her Lincoln, broke her ribs, and the studios forbid her from driving. From then on, her maid May Whitehead was her driver.

In August of the same year, she opened a successful cafe in the Pacific Palisades, called Thelma Todd's Sidewalk Cafe, attracting a diverse clientele of Hollywood celebrities as well as many tourists.

Todd continued her movie work through 1935, and was featured in the full-length Laurel and Hardy comedy *The Bohemian Girl*. This was to be her last movie. A mysterious accident ended the ice cream blonde's time on this earth. On December 16th, 1935 she was found dead behind the wheel of her beloved car trapped in the garage where the Lincoln was kept. A victim of accidental asphyxiation forced upon her by her business partner and lover. Arguments over money and alcohol and the pressures of being in the public eye took this beautiful woman to the great beyond in the front seat of her Lincoln. To this day she still has fans that mourn her. The building still stands on Pacific Coast Highway as a silent reminder of the golden days of Hollywood.



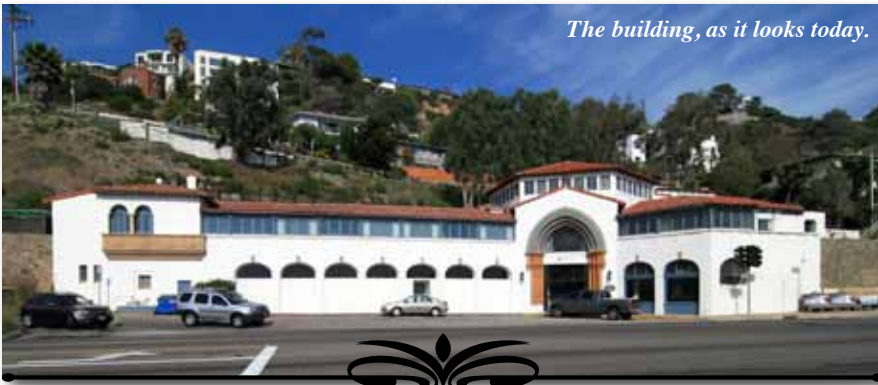
Proudly posing in front of the café.



*As she was found Monday morning
December 16th, 1935*



*The infamous garage where she was found. Located
at 17531 Posetano Road in the Pacific Palisades.*



The building, as it looks today.



Thelma's KB after many cattle drives.



Thelma's mother sold the car to a used car dealership for \$1,000. During World War II the car was used to herd cattle on an Arizona ranch with a 6-cylinder Ford engine under the hood. Through great effort and luck the original engine was found and the car was restored to its original glory.

The car resides today 40 minutes away from where it originally lived with Thelma in the hands of one of our very own Lincoln Owners Club members.

Editor's note: In the early 1960's, I was quite small when my father brought Thelma's car home. He had told me nothing about the car other than I might be able to sit in it to pretend I was driving while he was away at work. One afternoon, I was pretending to drive it. I heard a woman's voice. I turned around and there was the most beautiful blonde woman that my small eyes had ever seen. I can vaguely remember her talking to me about her life, as she told me there was something for me in the backseat. Of course when I told this to my father when he came home from work, he laughed at me and said I had a great imagination.

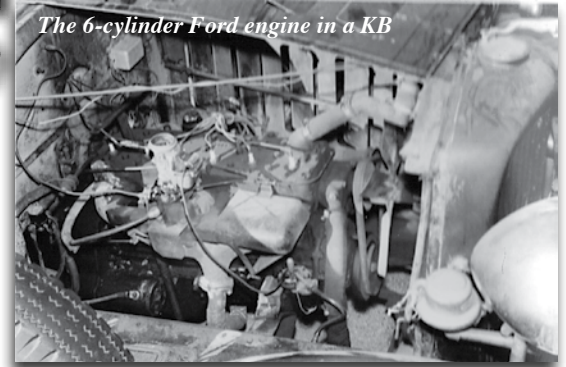
The next day was Saturday. Several of my Dad's friends came over to help work on the car. As a group of us circled the car with wrenches in hand, my father told them what I said the night before. Everyone laughed, but then I again asked about what might be in the backseat for me. Nothing was visible back there, but one of my Dad's friends removed the backseat, and sure enough, three antique toy cars (circa 1930), were waiting for me. They were badly damaged, but they still had a lot of play left in them

They were all shocked and then asked me about who had spoken to me. I described the blonde haired woman to them.

I now know I had seen Thelma Todd's spirit.

As hard as this is to believe, Thelma's garage, where she died, is documented as one of the most haunted places in Hollywood. Famous psychics are said to have smelled exhaust fumes there.

Sightings of her have also been reported in the building of her old restaurant as well as old time Hollywood hangouts. I am not sure about all of this maybe I have smelled too much exhaust smoke myself, except that I still have my toy cars that a beautiful blonde woman gave me so many years ago.



The 6-cylinder Ford engine in a KB



The sturdy workhorse



The famous car restored today

