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American Rocket Designer Tells All

The fastest American-built car is The Blue Flame rocket car, which held the absolute world land speed record from 1970-1983 with an average speed of 622.407 mph. It was designed to be the first land speed vehicle to achieve 1,000 mph. Why didn't it? What went wrong? If The Blue Flame is such an important American car, why is it housed in a German [museum](#)?

Ray Dausman, rocket designer for The Blue Flame, shares his experience and perspective in his new memoir *The Reluctant Rocketman: A Curious Journey in World Record Breaking*. Author Sarah Kasprovicz is Dausman's daughter, and has crafted his memoir to share the untold story of The Blue Flame and explain that while the world may see The Blue Flame as a huge success story, Dausman considers it a failure.

The Reluctant Rocketman is relevant today because the 1,000 mph benchmark has never been attained. There are several land speed record projects in the works all over the globe. One example is the British [Bloodhound SSC](#) team of engineers and land speed experts who are working feverishly to be ready in 2015 to make their attempt at 1,000 mph. Private space travel and space tourism have boosted interest and coverage of all things rocket-powered. *The Reluctant Rocketman* is about a part of American history, but it is also about timeless themes such as innovation and the price of invention.

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