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American cars in Havana

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The iconic American cars of the 1950's are of course part of the artistic canvas that is Havana. And this visit did not disappoint. They come streaming down the famous avenue, the Malecon, the colors bold, the lines of the Chevies and Fords graceful.

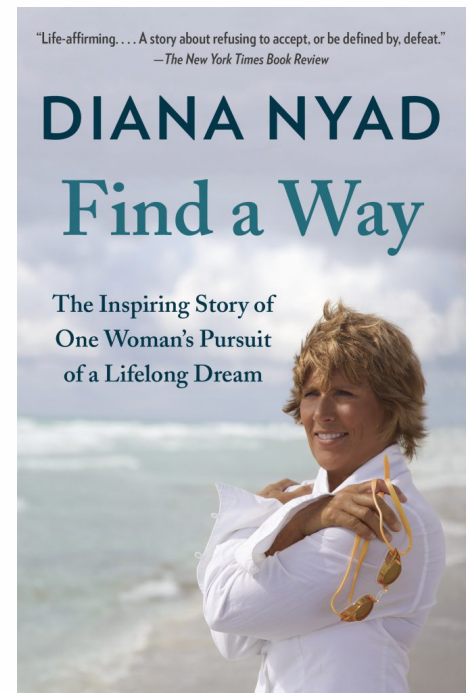
Years ago, when I was in Cuba for National Public Radio, I took my microphone out onto the cobblestoned streets of Old Havana and asked a nicely dressed gentleman if he spoke English. He said "a little, I can". Then I asked if he knew the American cars. He was insulted. "Of course I know the American cars. I am Cubano."

So I asked if he would describe the cars coming past us. He grabbed the microphone and didn't let it go for eleven minutes.

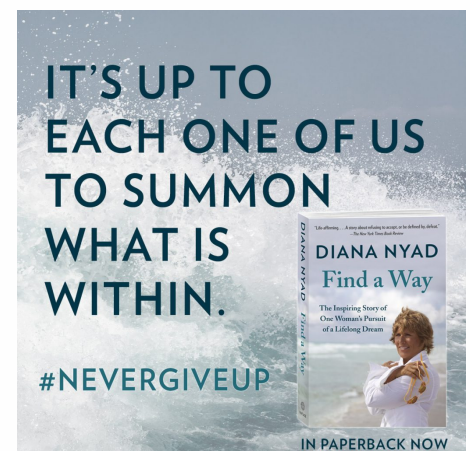
"Here is coming now the Ford Fairlane. This is 1955. And you can see by the ornamentation on the hood, it is late 1955. Ah, now is coming the Chevrolet Bel Air, the dream of every Cubano. This is 1953. You will notice the two tone, cherry red and white."

And this wonderful character must have described, with gusto and fine detail, a dozen fabulous cars that cruised by us. There were convertibles, oversized fins, whites and blacks and ocean blues and emerald greens.

Just another of the charming aspects of Havana.



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