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Confetti rains down on David & Ginny Sydorick's 1937 Alfa Romeo 8C 2900B Touring Berlinetta in 2018.

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The Countdown to Best of Show at the Pebble Beach Concours

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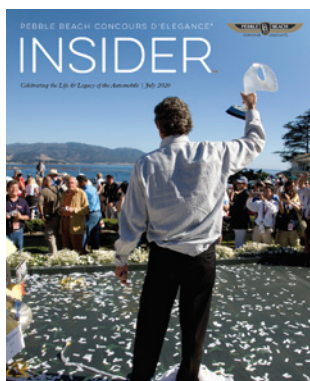
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On the Cover

Harry Yeaggy raises the 2007 Best of Show Trophy won by his 1935 Duesenberg SJ "Mormon Meteor" Speedster.

Turn to page 28 for more Pebble Beach Concours Best of Show moments.



LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN

As I sit down to write this letter, we have 400 (long!) days until the next Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance — which to me is far too many! But it does give me time to think about how the day of the Concours unfolds and the moments I miss the most.

Often I have shared the joy I feel when I greet each entrant pulling onto our competition field, but I've been more quiet about the excitement that comes when we name our Best of Show winner. This is a very public moment, of course. But it is also an intensely private moment — one that I am deeply honored to share with the winning owner.

For the owner, this moment distills all that has gone before it. It tallies the time and effort spent caring for a great car, weighing the angst and satisfaction to be found in overcoming obstacles to preserve or restore it, as well as the pleasure of driving it and sharing it with others.

This is also, admittedly, an intensely complicated moment from a back-of-stage perspective. After Derek Hill, our Master of Ceremonies, reads aloud the names of our final Best of Show Nominees, there is a small pause before the winner is announced — and in that pause, a myriad of things must happen. We confirm that the nominees have their engines running. We cue the band, the fireworks and the confetti cannons. And Pebble Beach CEO Bill Perocchi begins his walk forward with the Best of Show trophy. . . .

I've witnessed 34 Best of Show moments to date — almost half of our 69 — and I cannot even begin to predict how the winning owner will react.

I can still see Ralph Lauren leaping from his Mercedes-Benz without bothering to open the door, and Harry Yeaggy hoisting the trophy for his Duesenberg high overhead.

"Hat or no hat?" one winner urgently asked, uncertain as to protocol. "But I didn't change my shoes!" another declared. (While that might sound vain, I suspect the act was more of a talisman — a bit like carrying an umbrella to ensure the sun.) And as Jon and Mary Shirley emerged from their Alfa 8C to face the cheering crowd, Mary looked at me imploringly and held out her tiny puppy: "Would you be willing to hold Alfa for me?" Of course!

Although it usually takes place quietly, quite often there is a figurative passing of the crown. Prior winners emerge to offer their congratulations and perhaps a bit of advice. Bob Lee caught up to Harry Yeaggy at the postshow party and said, "Harry, feel free to call me in a few weeks, when things calm down a bit, and I'll tell you what just happened to you."



Master of Ceremonies Derek Hill and Chairman Sandra Button moments after the 2017 Best of Show moment.

The Best of Show moment can be overwhelming — even for accomplished professionals and titans of industry. "I can't begin to tell you what this means to me, I can't begin to express my gratitude now, but I promise to do so tomorrow," said Dr. Peter Williamson. And he was true to his word, sending both a lovely note and a very generous check for our charities.

At this point, we have a long year to wait before we name our next Best of Show winner, but our 70th concours competition field is set, and it includes over half of our prior Best of Show cars. How wonderful it will be to name our next winner with all of them looking on!

In the meantime, I am pleased to announce that Lexus, a partner to both the Concours and Pebble Beach Company, is stepping forward to help our charities *this year* by offering a car — a 2021 Lexus LC 500 Convertible — for our annual charity drawing. Details will be coming to you soon via newsletter, and I hope you will consider participating in this fundraising effort, joining with us to help people in need even though we cannot gather together for the Concours.

I also hope that you will keep in touch, reaching out to me and others to share your love of cars.

Sincerely yours,

Sandra Button
Chairman

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RESTORING

Finding the Heart & Soul of a Carrozzeria Touring Alfa Romeo 2900



Tucked away in one of North Vancouver's industrial districts is RX Autoworks — a specialized shop known for some of the best prewar Alfa Romeo restorations and some of the nicest car guys in the classic car business. They are responsible for many Pebble Beach cars, including the 2018 Best of Show, a 1937 Alfa Romeo 8C 2900B owned by David and Ginny Sydorick.

BY RICHARD MICHAEL OWEN

A WINNER



Alongside its 2018 First in Class and Best of Show trophies, the Alfa Romeo 8C 2900B, owned by David and Ginny Sydorick, garnered two other Elegance Awards: The J. B. & Dorothy Nethercutt Trophy for Most Elegant Closed Car and the Charles A. Chayne Trophy for significant engineering in advance of its era.



David Cohen's Alfa Romeo 6C 1750, originally built by the Carrossier Figoni, an earlier RX restoration, on the 2012 Pebble Beach Tour d'Elegance



The Alfa Romeo 8C 2900B Touring Berlinetta owned by Miles Collier was restored by RX in 2006. First exhibited at the Paris Automobile Salon in 1938, this car went on to win the Mille Miglia in 1947.

MIKE TAYLOR AND IAN DAVEY

work together as co-owners of the business. They first met in 1980 with a passion for Japanese cars and rebuilding rotary “RX” engines. Through the 1980s and 1990s, RX Autoworks became known for impeccable paint and body work. This is especially true of their E-types and Austin Healeys, which are some of the best in the Pacific Northwest. These English restorations caught the attention of David and Adele Cohen, Vancouver collectors who have supported RX through numerous Pebble Beach projects. At the time the Cohens owned the most original of the five Alfa Romeo 8C Touring Berlinettas. They graciously allowed RX to partly disassemble it for research purposes, and through this generosity all of the subsequent restorations have benefited. Using the Cohens’ car as a reference, RX was able to secure their first complete restoration of another Touring Berlinetta, owned by Miles Collier. This restoration was named First in Class and was a nominee for Best of Show at Pebble Beach in 2006. So, when the Cohens purchased a one-of-a-kind Alfa Romeo 6C 1750 built by the Carrossier Figoni for the 1933 Paris Auto Salon, RX was an obvious choice. The car came from Waldie Greyvensteyn’s private museum in Bloemfontein, South Africa, and was shipped to Vancouver in August 2009 for a full restoration.

To start the project, RX went on an archaeological search for original fit and finishes. The previous restoration was from the 1970s, but much of the original car was still present. For instance, they found the original cream and black paint colors as well as remnants of the original body from when it raced

in the 24 Hours of Le Mans in 1935. The cracked-lacquer finish for the dashboard was also found underneath a brass plaque. As RX dismantled the aluminum body, they found areas of the ash-wood frame that needed to be replaced. In doing so they kept most of the original ash to preserve the car’s original integrity. On the wood frame they also found handwritten construction notes from the Figoni craftsman who originally built the car. These were preserved and not painted over. The result of this work was a stunning showpiece with an unforgettable cream-on-black color scheme featuring prominent French teardrop curves. It won the *Coppa d’Oro* at Villa d’Este in 2012 and was awarded First in Class and was a Best of Show Nominee at the Pebble Beach Concours that same year.

Many will remember when David and Ginny Sydorick’s 1937 Alfa Romeo 8C 2900B was named Best of Show in 2018. At the time it was the second Alfa Romeo 2900 with Carrozzeria Touring Berlinetta bodywork to win the Concours and it did so with expert help from David Smith of Seattle. The Sydorick car benefits from being the first prototype of the five Touring Berlinettas and was shown at the 1937 Paris Auto Salon and 1938 Berlin Motor Show. Not surprisingly, it is unique in having a more raked front grille treatment and a lack of side running boards. In addition, Touring issued two new patents labeled “Brevetto” on the car: one for the Superleggera-built aluminum body over a steel-tube frame, and another for their adjustable lumbar seats, which feature internal adjustable belts. Sydorick’s 2900 arrived at RX Autoworks in 2016 in restored condition with traces of older restorations under the skin. Careful work over the next two years was needed to assess what was original and what was modified throughout the car’s previous 80-year history.

When asked about his involvement with RX, and in particular the Sydorick 2900, David Smith comments: “I’ve had the pleasure of working with RX on a couple of projects over the past three years. I met the RX team at Pebble Beach while judging one of their restorations and was impressed with their

“EVERY TIME YOU GO TO PEBBLE BEACH YOU LEARN A LOT, EVEN IF YOU LOSE. WE ARE ALWAYS GOING TO TRY AND WIN, AND IF WE DON’T, WE ARE STILL GOING TO HAVE A GOOD TIME.” — Ian Davey

work — and especially their attention to detail. As both a customer and a consultant, I feel I am a part of RX on many levels. We work very well together because of our mutual trust and respect, and their attitude: ‘Let’s get it right, together.’ These are key elements for creating a very good project. I am very fortunate to be able to go into their shop and use their tools like I am part of their team. I also feel privileged to be another set of outside eyes for RX, which is critical to any good restoration. One of my greatest pleasures in my thirty years in the car business was being a part of this 2.9 Alfa and the work we accomplished together. The awards this car has received are a bonus.”

For the restorers, Pebble Beach is an all-out competition among friends and rivals. So, what does it take to win? According to Ian Davey it takes experience: “Every time you go to Pebble Beach you learn a lot, even if you lose. We are always going to try and win, and if we don’t, we are still going to have a good time.” At RX, Ian is responsible for the paint and body. He comments that everyone’s expectations are higher than the lacquer paint and putty first used in period. For the Alfa Romeo, Ian sprayed BASF urethane paint and then painstakingly wet sanded and polished it down to the mirror-finish that this

lacquer naturally yields. He says, “People don’t appreciate how long it takes to do.” For every car there is a challenge, and for the Sydorick car the challenge was the color. Ian selected the best of 75 spray-out cards to achieve a deep blue that doesn’t turn purple in the sun. He had to avoid Magenta toners and come up with “a clear color free of milky tones.” Carrozzeria Touring built just five Berlinettas on the Alfa Romeo 2900B Lungo chassis, and three of them have passed through the capable hands at RX Autoworks. “At a glance, if you lined them up, they would all look similar, but they are all dimensionally different and different in detail,” according to Ian. “Once you start working on them you really start noticing the differences — they were hand built, after all. We really, really try not to over-restore them. It’s one of the bigger challenges we have and very subtle — lots of little things.”

Co-owner Mike Taylor works alongside Ian and is a specialist in metal fabrication and ash-wood frames. His business is restoration, but he says, “It’s not always about the car; it’s also about the clients, who become long-term friends.” Only the most passionate people, the most elegant cars and the most determined restorers in the world produce a Best of Show win. According to Mike, “It takes the right car with the right size and the wow-factor. We took David Cohen’s fabulous 6C 1750 with a one-off Figoni body to Pebble and it didn’t have the presence to win outright — it was a pretty small car.” For the class judges, Mike says, “All the details have to be right. It can’t be over-restored or too shiny, but it still has to be the right car.”

Mike is determined to get his restorations faithful to the original design. He sees them as the sum of their subtle details, with original fit and finishes that come together to make a correct car. “Put it together with all the right bolts, the right hose clamps, all the correct window etchings and engraving on the headlight rings — it’s all those things together that make a winner.” Research is also a huge part of these projects. “Fortunately for us we have done three of the five Touring Coupés, and I have flown all over the world to reference the



Much of Joseph Figoni’s original ash frame was used during the 6C 1750’s restoration, and the dashboard was authentically repainted. A year after being awarded with a “Prix d’Honneur” at both the Monte Carlo and Nice Concours d’Elegance in 1934, this car finished sixth at the 24 Hours of Le Mans, driven by Guy Don and Jean Desvignes.

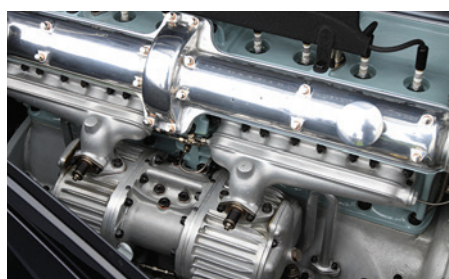




Top left: An original Alfa 8C ignition key as well as original electrical switches were almost impossible to find.

Middle left: Sydorick's 2.9 is still fitted with its original engine, 422001, seen here on the engine plate and mount.

Bottom left: The beating heart of the very first Alfa Romeo 8C 2900B Touring Berlinetta



Halfway through the restoration, the classic Touring design is now instantly recognizable.

Alfa Romeos that haven't been in the shop." Whilst studying the world's most original 2900 Berlinetta, Mike was able to sample the original shellac sheath for the wiring harness from behind the dashboard where it was well preserved. This allowed RX to accurately reproduce the color and texture for subsequent restorations.

Finding parts is another hurdle for any restoration. David Smith sourced many hard-to-find bits, such as an original ignition key, trafficators and various switchgear, to make the car as correct as possible. David makes the yearly trip to Padua, Italy, to attend the *Auto e Moto d'Epoca* swap meet in search of these rare parts. What wasn't available to purchase was handmade by David or RX themselves. Mike recalls, "David was hired as a consultant and would find really rare parts, restore them, then send them up to us." During the restoration Mike remade the window surrounds and the front bumper.

"IT'S NOT ALWAYS ABOUT THE CAR; IT'S ALSO ABOUT THE CLIENTS, WHO BECOME LONG-TERM FRIENDS." — Mike Taylor

The door handles on the car were incorrect, so Mike fabricated new units that were hollow steel like the originals and weighed a tenth of the solid brass units they replaced. The grille was also completely remade. Mike says the shape was all wrong and had a consistently round profile where the original had a distinct peak or V-shape. The new grille changes the look of the car and is a good example of why sometimes it is necessary to re-restore a car. About Pebble Beach Sunday, Mike declares, "Driving out onto the lawn is a fantastic feeling. The sun is just rising, there's the smell of wet grass, and you know whatever happens you're going to have a great day."

Rob Fram joined RX Autoworks in 1997 as a mechanic after completing a concours Jaguar XK140 with Mike and Ian. Since then, he has become an integral part of the company and is often the front man for the shop. He says that every restoration is done inside the shop at RX "where we can catch things before they become an irreversible problem. We pick each other's work apart — none of us takes it personally. Having someone look over your shoulder offers a different perspective and it just leads to a better final product."

So why restore a previous First in Class-winning 2900? According to Rob "the level of restoration standards has risen so high and the values have risen so high from the time it was previously restored. The work done wasn't 100% correct, but it was what was expected then — it was beautifully done,

The 1950 Alfa Romeo 6C 2500 Ghia Supergioiello Coupé, owned by Jonathan and Wendy Segal, was named First in Class at Pebble Beach in 2019.




but incorrect.” Rob is referring to small details that weren’t so heavily scrutinized back in the day. For instance, the Alfa had Lucas switchgear on the dash and English connectors throughout. “You have to keep in mind, the best car at the time was worth far less. You can’t go through the cost of making it 100% accurate if the work far exceeds the value of the car.” A good example of this is the wiring harness. “Most 2.9s are done with a commercially available silicon and fiberglass wiring sheath that looks good, but it’s not right and that’s not how Alfa Romeo did it,” Rob says. “Once you see it done right, you can’t unsee when it’s done wrong.”

Rob has earned the privilege of driving over 500 miles in three different Alfa Romeo 2900s and has real insight into their character. He says “the performance is just fantastic; from 3000 rpm it pulls like a train and makes so much noise from the supercharger and straight-cut gears. The right-hand drive, central throttle, reversed gearshift and one very small mirror take some getting used to.” Alfa Romeo got their formula just right with the dry sump oil system, twin superchargers, adjustable suspension, twin-overhead camshafts and hydraulic brakes — innovations that are all still used today. Rob says, “They were so far ahead of their time; it took an incredible skillset to build those cars back in the day. In 1937 it was a 140-mph, 200 bhp car that weighed less than a Mazda Miata. The other Rolls-Royces, Bentleys and Mercedes we’ve had in the shop are tanks by comparison. The way it shifts, corners, steers and brakes are reflective of a car much, much newer.” These cars benefited from a successful and lengthy motor sports career. A trio of 2900A team cars placed first–second–third at the 1936 Mille Miglia, and four specially built Touring Spiders, built to 2900MM specification, accomplished the same feat at the 1938 edition.

When Alfa Romeo took this racing car to Carrozzeria Touring to make their *Coupé Ultraleggero Aeroprofilato*, a masterpiece was born. Sweeping fastback lines added drama to the prewar supercar’s impressive specification. One peculiarity of the Touring Berlinetta is the fuel filler. Alfa Romeo built all the chassis with the same fuel tank, and the centrally mounted intake was more suited for open bodywork. For the coupés this

meant the filler neck came right out inside the cockpit. Rob says, “It’s a two-person job to fill the car. You need to open the trunk which hinges on the bottom, then there’s a funny plastic cover in the interior so you can look into the back window and fill the tank from the trunk.” No ordinary fuel will work, and they currently use a VP Racing Fuels formula that is fully leaded and has a Research Octane Number of 114.

For the 2019 Pebble Beach Concours, RX presented an Alfa Romeo 6C 2500 SS for Jonathan and Wendy Segal. This one-off Alfa was built by Carrozzeria Ghia in 1950 on a custom-built Gilco frame. It was also one of the very last 6C 2500 series known as the *Sprint Supergioiello*. This relatively modern car, which sports massive domed hubcaps, was awarded First in Class. The 6C 2500 restoration was done with the help of RX’s newest team member, J. P. Parker, who did the metal fabrication on the all-steel body with aluminum shut panels. J. P. says, “The engine bay side was painstakingly patched. There were many drilled holes that had been added over the years for various accessories and brackets.” Remarkably, most of the outer body skin was in “great shape” with no accident damage and most of the original panels intact. “As far as I could see, it was a very straight car. All the panels were original. They needed fixing, but we refused to start from scratch and tried to repair as much as we could with the original metal.”


Part of the joy of the Pebble Beach Concours d’Elegance is seeing knowledgeable, hardworking shops like the four-person team at RX Autoworks collaborating with passionate owners who generously share their cars as part of an incredible Pebble Beach Automotive Week and presenting the latest and greatest for the world’s stage. 



Mike Taylor, David Sydorick and Rob Fram and a rather special Alfa Romeo on the morning of the Tour d’Elegance in 2018



BY STROTHER MACMINN



Strother MacMinn and Charles Chayne
present the 1978 Gwenn Graham Trophy for
Most Elegant Car to Jules "J." Heumann's 1933
Hispano-Suiza J12 Vanvooren Faux Cabriolet.

EDITOR'S NOTE

As a youth Strother MacMinn wandered into the studio of coachbuilder Walter M. Murphy and befriended designer Franklin Hershey — and when Hershey moved to GM's Art & Colour Section, he took "Mac" with him. MacMinn later worked with Hudson and Toyota, too, but his influence on car design reached far beyond those specific marques through the many students he taught as a much-loved professor at ArtCenter College of Design for nearly five decades beginning in 1947.

MacMinn attended the Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance from its earliest years, often bringing several students with him. He was first invited to be a Judge here in 1961, and when Lorin Tryon and Jules "J." Heumann stepped into the role of Co-Chairmen in 1972 they asked MacMinn to serve as Chief Honorary Judge, a role he held for a quarter century, overseeing the judges voting for Best of Show and several special awards. In 1974, two years after he stepped into that position, MacMinn wrote an essay on elegance (excerpted here) for our event program.

The world of Elegance owes its perpetuation to the great craftsmen and designers who have built it, the *cognoscenti* who have had the perception and appreciation to exercise it, and to the Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance where it thrives and flourishes.

The allocation of elegance, whether it be applied to a behavior, a concept, or an artifact is often slippery to define because it does not necessarily follow a formula. Rather, it could be described as an assembly of certain ingredients in a particular environment whose nature is extremely selective. This ambiguity seems nearly evasive but it really is only intended to produce a framework of sufficiently generous latitude in which a full variety of sub-definitions can occur that will establish friendly corollaries and affirmation by experience. If there was a positive formula it might tend to destroy the innovative process that is in the heart of elegant design.

A woman, an automobile, or an engineering solution may each epitomize elegance. When a woman carries herself gracefully and confidently into a social environment and enhances it with the selectivity of her attire and the charm of her conduct



Strother MacMinn (at right) with his team of Honorary Judges in the early 1980s.


she is admired as being elegant in her performance. When an engineer produces a structure or a system that solves a problem by performing effortlessly in an enduring manner and with relative economy it may be hailed as an elegant design. In either case, however, the essential ingredient is the artfulness of the production that produces a sense of enchantment in the eyes of the beholders. It is the skill, cleverness, style, tact, flair, appropriateness, individual logic, polish and esthetic taste that caps the accomplishment and marks it as a moment or an item of true elegance.

An automobile, all by itself, can achieve a certain aura that fulfills many of these high aims in the purely visual sense. Craftsmanship, structure, proportion, color, identity and detail can assemble a promise of performance that will fire the imagination of the observer. All of these things, even in repose, can suggest the moment in active life when the total ensemble might be realized like a great wine or a timeless romance.

The beauty of the Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance is that it provides the ultimate setting for just such a collection of experiences. It is the environment in which all of the cars shown have a real and purposeful home. The splendor and selectivity of Del Monte brings out every subtlety of refinement and strength of character inherent in each design so as to be enjoyed by all visitors and enthusiasts as a completely complimentary statement.

One special advantage of the Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance is that many of the cars can be seen in motion and in a very gentle simulation of their normal activity. The first three winners in each classification receive their awards as the cars are individually driven to the ramp at the head of the field. This completes the delight for spectators because there is no better moment than when the cars begin to move across the grass and climb the ramp driven by their distinguished and elated owners.

Automobiles in motion are a study in themselves. The play of light, the transition of reflection patterns enhancing the sculpture of the body panels, the proportional balances from a variety of angles, and the sounds (or lack of them) complete each car's statement of character. As the car comes to rest and the doors open to allow the [driver] and passengers to alight, the enrichment of the interior is revealed for the pleasure of enthusiastic admirers.

It's quite a moment, this collective display of magnificent design achievement by dedicated and enthusiastic men and women who so sincerely appreciate the art of automobile design. It's a day when each participant and observer can truly appreciate all of the qualities that constitute automotive elegance. 

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The Hon. Sir Michael Kadoorie and his wife Betty with their 1931 Bentley 8 Litre Gurney Nutting Sports Tourer, which was named Best of Show in 2019.



MY PERSPECTIVE

THE HONORABLE SIR MICHAEL KADOORIE

Collector and Chairman of The Hongkong and Shanghai Hotels, which includes The Peninsula Hotels group

Why cars? Motor cars throughout the ages have always created interest but more importantly they have brought like-minded passionate people together. The friendships made are enduring and add to the appreciation of life.

If you could go back in time, what historic automotive event or person would you want to see and why? In my case, I believe the two Mille Miglia Historic in which I had the pleasure of participating made the greatest impression on me. Not only was driving a historic car in the company of so many others impressive, but so was the way the whole of Italy rose to the occasion, with thousands lining the roads and cheering the drivers on. It is a phenomenon that can only be attributed to the Italian people who are passionate in their support. Participating in the Mille Miglia Historica is a bit like stepping back in time, but I would love to be able to have witnessed the early Mille Miglia — perhaps the 1955 edition when Sir Stirling Moss with Denis Jenkinson completed the course in a record time of just 10 hours and 7 minutes. That record remains unbroken.

The Hon. Sir Michael Kadoorie and a friend walk the field, checking out the competition.



What Pebble Beach Concours moment do you remember most?

I think the good fortune of the outright award of Best of Show is the pinnacle that everyone must surely aspire to. In this connection, 2019 was my lucky year; I am fortunate to be the caretaker of the beautiful car that won this prestigious honor. The 8 Litre is the ultimate W. O. Bentley-era automobile. This car represents Bentley at its finest, and it had an elegance and finish that the Pebble Beach Concours felt was worthy.



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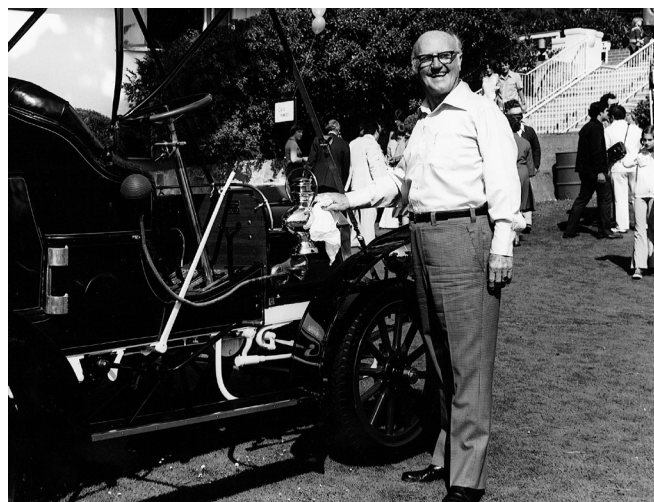
GREAT FUTURES START **HERE.**



Above: William Harrah and Overton A. Phillips on the field with Briggs Cunningham in 1968.

Above right: Alton Walker with his 1905 Buick C Touring on the show field.

Right: An overview of the competition field in the 1960s, when cars were arrayed on the lawn of The Lodge rather than the 18th fairway of Pebble Beach Golf Links.



OUR BEST OF SHOW WINNERS: *The 1960s*

Before we award our Best of Show trophy to another deserving automobile in 2021, we are taking the time to honor past winners. The June Insider looked back at the cars that took our top prize in the 1950s, and here we move to the 1960s — a time when the Pebble Beach Concours was struggling to affirm its identity apart from the races. It was also forced to deal with bad weather, resulting calendar shifts, and the loss of key leaders. Nonetheless, the show field witnessed the growth of friendly competition.

1961 BEST OF SHOW

1930 Packard 740 Roadster

SHOWN BY SCOTT NEWHALL

Three decades into its existence, this Packard was lying in shambles in a San Francisco garage. Then Scott Newhall, executive editor of the *San Francisco Chronicle*, paid one hundred dollars to rescue it. With his wife, Ruth, Newhall restored the car and exhibited it at the 11th Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance, ultimately taking the show's top award.

That 11th concours was held in the spring of 1961, having been delayed from the prior November when bad weather forced its cancellation. Twice more early in the decade, rains would force the concours to move from Lodge lawn to polo field, so the event was eventually rescheduled to the summer when rains were much less likely.

Despite the many transitions, Newhall was an active participant from the 1950s through much of the 1960s. Once, after placing First in Class with a Mercedes-Benz, he gleefully showed off the specks of paint on his hands, having just completed the car's restoration during the prior night.

Tragically, after its Best of Show win, the engine of his gorgeous yellow Packard caught fire on the way home. The car was later re-restored, and Ruth drove it on tours — with much aplomb, according to those she flew past.

Thereafter the car was owned by Willett H. Tryon, Chris Bock, Tommy Crock and then Paul Bonin and his son Fred. The Bonins toured the car extensively throughout the West and they showed it again at Pebble Beach in 2000.

"What do I like about it? Well, I'm a bulldozer man," said Paul Bonin. "This car is a big thing and it goes. It's solid and

it's reliable. It has stalled a couple times, but it has never had to be towed home."

1962 BEST OF SHOW

1913 Rolls-Royce Silver Ghost London to Edinburgh Tourer

SHOWN BY ALTON H. WALKER

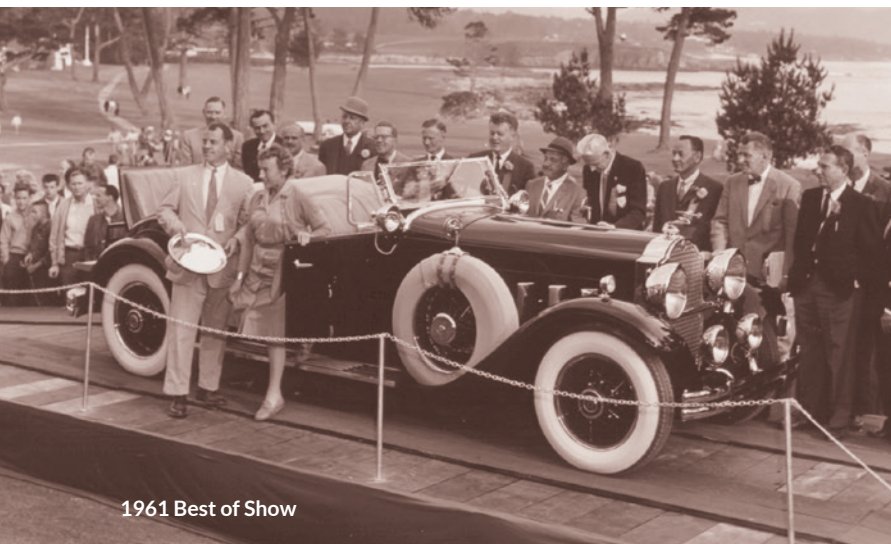
This 1913 Rolls-Royce Silver Ghost is the oldest car to have won the top award at the Pebble Beach Concours. In fact, it is the only car built in the antique era (before World War I) to have been named Best of Show. (Next oldest among our past winners are two Hispano-Suiza H6B Labourdette Skiffs dating to 1922.)

This Rolls-Royce took top honors when it was shown by Alton Walker in 1962.

Walker lived just blocks from The Lodge at Pebble Beach, and he was instrumental in starting the Concours. After enthusiasts successfully lobbied for real European-style road races to be held at Pebble Beach in 1950, he worked with company publicist Gwenn Graham to add a European-style concours d'elegance. In fact, he served as its Founding Chairman that first year.

Walker loved a wide variety of cars, ranging from early antiques to a then-new Volkswagen Karmann Ghia, and from its start he ensured that the concours showcased old cars alongside the new cars that were initially the focus. He himself often brought a handful of cars in the early years, and he continued to show cars nearly every year right up to 1984, when at age 80 he competed with a 1926 Locomobile.

Despite his ecumenical taste, it is evident that the marque Rolls-Royce was Walker's favorite. And in the 1960s and



1961 Best of Show



1962 Best of Show



1963 Best of Show



1965 Best of Show

'70s, it was the favorite of many concours entrants, organizers and judges too — particularly head judge Lucius Beebe, who once wrote a paean to Rolls-Royce for *Esquire* magazine.

This Rolls-Royce is currently owned by enthusiast Sam Mann, who has recorded four Best of Show wins himself with cars that he has restored.

1963 BEST OF SHOW

1931 Pierce-Arrow 41 LeBaron Sport Sedan

SHOWN BY WILLIAM HARRAH

In 1963, gaming legend William Harrah served notice that he was up to the challenge, winning Best of Show with this 1931 Pierce-Arrow 41. Fittingly the car was of the same year, make and model that Phil Hill had shown in 1955. But Harrah's Pierce-Arrow was bodied by LeBaron as a Sport Sedan. Prior to this point, as a look at the top contenders from the first dozen years of the Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance makes clear, J. B. Nethercutt was the man to beat. He had established his own meticulous standards for restoring cars, setting the bar for all other enthusiasts, and he had already garnered not one



1964 Best of Show

but two Best of Show awards at the Concours, winning with a duPont and a Bugatti.

But Harrah made certain that this Concours would be a competition and not a one-man show. He not only won in 1963, he won again in 1964, so for a brief time, the two men were tied two-all. Harrah won again in 1966, but Nethercutt came back with two more wins as the decade ended.

Theirs was a rivalry — and a friendship — that continued for years.

1964 BEST OF SHOW

1935 Bugatti Type 50 Coupé Profilé

SHOWN BY WILLIAM HARRAH

Bugatti garnered its third win in 1964, tying it with the number of wins racked up by new Jaguars in the first years of the Pebble Beach Concours. In two short years, with another win, it would become the winningest marque at this concours — a title it continues to hold to this day, having garnered nine wins in total.

The Type 50, which debuted in 1930 at the height of Bugatti's luxury line, was intended as a super-sport car offering high performance. Built on a wheelbase that was initially .4 meters shorter than the marque's Type 46, the Type 50 had a supercharged 4.9-litre engine and twin overhead camshafts. Later "T" versions of the Type 50 reverted to the 3.5-meter wheelbase of the prior Type 46 so they could carry four-door saloon coachwork.

A total of 65 Type 50s were built between 1930 and 1934, and most had enclosed bodies. The Type 50 has been said to be the first characteristic creation of Ettore Bugatti's son Jean, who was responsible for the bodywork styling and design of Bugatti cars from 1930 until his death in 1939.

This particular 1932 Bugatti Type 50 Coupé Profilé was owned for years by William Harrah of Reno, Nevada. It was Harrah who exhibited this car at the 1964 Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance, taking home the Best of Show award for the second year in a row. Ultimately Harrah would go on to record four wins at Pebble Beach.

This car is now owned by Evert Louwman of Raamsdonksveer in The Netherlands.

1965 BEST OF SHOW

1927 Bentley 4-1/2 Litre Vanden Plas Tourer

SHOWN BY CHRISTOPHER F. COBURN

In 1964, Bentley joined Rolls-Royce as a recognized favorite marque among early concours attendees. It was accorded two ongoing classes — Bentley Prewar and Bentley Postwar — in addition to the three classes for Rolls-Royce. And these continued well into the 1980s. (Duesenberg would finally join them with an ongoing class in 1972, Ferrari in 1974, and Bugatti and Mercedes-Benz would sporadically begin to be accorded classes toward the end of that decade.)

So the win in 1965 by this magnificent creation of W.O. Bentley was not a surprise.

1966 BEST OF SHOW

1931 Bugatti Type 41 Coupé de Ville

SHOWN BY WILLIAM HARRAH

Ettore Bugatti's masterwork, the Type 41, better known as the Bugatti Royale, offers majesty unmatched by other automobiles. The Royale is 6 meters long with a wheelbase of 4.3 meters and 24-inch wheels. It is powered by an eight-cylinder 12.7-litre engine. The chassis alone originally sold for about \$20,000 to \$25,000, and the coachwork generally cost another \$15,000 to \$20,000.

Just six Bugatti Royales were created, between 1927 and 1933, and all six were gathered together for the first time for the 1985 Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance.

That was the second trip to Pebble Beach for this 1931 Bugatti Type 41. William Harrah of Reno, Nevada, restored the car and showed it at the 1966 Concours, easily winning Best of Show.

This Bugatti, officially chassis 41111, was commissioned by Parisian clothier Armand Esders. The initial body, a massive roadster for just two people, was designed by Ettore Bugatti's son Jean and crafted by Henri Binder. A few short years into its life, that body was removed and replaced by a formal coupé de ville, also crafted by Binder. Bulletproof glass and armor plating were added then too. The rebodied car was said to be for King Carol of Rumania, but he never took delivery.

During the war, the car was crated and hidden in the sewers of Paris. Thereafter, the car went through several owners, both in England and the United States. William Harrah and Harrah's Automobile Collection had the car for more than two decades,



1966 Best of Show



1968 Best of Show



1967 Best of Show



1969 Best of Show

then sold it to General William Lyon. Before the last century concluded, it was purchased by Volkswagen AG, which now owns the rights to the marque Bugatti.

What is it like to drive a Bugatti Royale?

Witness this description from a pamphlet about the Royale: “After settling oneself behind the large steering wheel, the view down the long sleek hood is almost one of dismay; but after getting underway and finding that the steering is most precise and comfortable, the great car begins to ‘shorten itself’ and one begins to feel more at ease. One really never loses the impression that this is a huge automobile, and this, topped with the knowledge of its great worth, demands respect.”

1967 BEST OF SHOW

1937 Rolls-Royce Phantom III H. J. Mulliner Saloon
SHOWN BY RALPH C. SHERMUND

At the 1967 Pebble Beach Concours, this 1937 Rolls-Royce Phantom III with a saloon body by H. J. Mulliner received the

Lucius Beebe Trophy for best Rolls-Royce just prior to being named Best of Show. It also won the Rolls-Royce Owners Club National Meet later in the year.

The motor car was first created for T. C. Maryon-Wilson of Surrey, England. It was later brought to the United States by Kenneth Horacio Wallace, who had an accident with it and rebuilt it, and is believed to have made a few revisions to it amidst that rebuild. After Ralph C. Shermund bought the car, it took him several years to put it to rights — and Shermund made certain his efforts were recognized; after the saloon took top prize in 1967, Shermund showed it again at Pebble Beach in 1968, 1971, 1972 and 1975, taking many more prizes, and he also showed it at several other events throughout the West. Soon thereafter, the concours instituted the rule that a car could only be shown once every ten years!

1968 BEST OF SHOW

1964 Maserati Mistral Coupé
SHOWN BY STANLEY W. GOOD JR.

Considered an outlier among other Best of Shows of the period, this Maserati took the top prize while still a relatively new car. But its win was emblematic of the growing appreciation for Italian cars and coachwork in the postwar era.

1969 BEST OF SHOW

1934 Duesenberg J Murphy-Style Dual Cowl Phaeton
SHOWN BY J. B. NETHERCUTT

The two-tone green Duel Cowl Phaeton body of this 1934 Duesenberg J was lovingly created by the Nethercutt team to replace a car that was lost to the collection after a series of trades. The concours selection process seeks to avoid such replicas today — but it is lovely.

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J. B. and Dorothy Nethercutt cross the awards ramp in their 1934 Packard 1108 Twelve LeBaron Sport Phaeton at the 1995 Pebble Beach Concours.

Jack and Helen Nethercutt pilot their 1930 Ruxton Sedan at the 2006 Pebble Beach Concours.



EDITOR'S NOTE

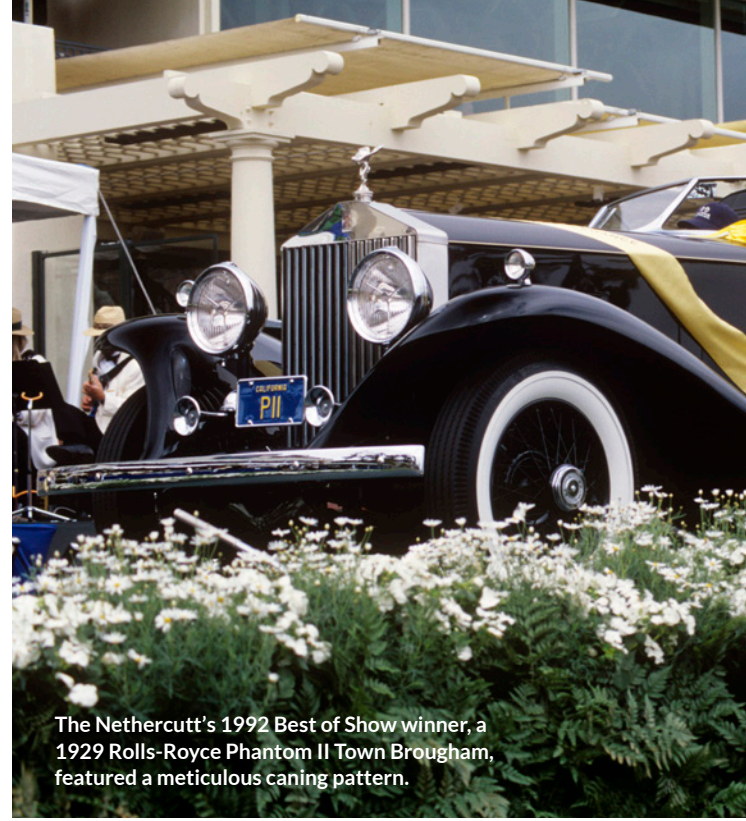
J. B. Nethercutt and his wife, Dorothy, remain the winningest entrants at the Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance; cars they showed here recorded a total of six Best of Show wins — two more wins than that of William Harrah or, more recently, Sam and Emily Mann. The Nethercutts set forth the meticulous standards that brought Pebble Beach to the forefront in the car world, and although the interests of enthusiasts are ever-changing and some aspects of judging have also evolved, their influence remains. The Nethercutt Collection, now under the guidance of Jack and Helen Nethercutt, continues to draw enthusiasts to it and to share its cars with enthusiasts here and at many other automotive events. Back in the year 2000, as this concours approached its 50th anniversary, we invited J. B. Nethercutt to write about his history with cars and this concours, and his essay is excerpted here.

THE PRESERVATION OF FUNCTIONAL FINE ART

BY J. B. NETHERCUTT



An overview of the Nethercutts in their 1934 Packard 1108, with Dick Noland at the wheel.



The Nethercutt's 1992 Best of Show winner, a 1929 Rolls-Royce Phantom II Town Brougham, featured a meticulous caning pattern.

ollecting great automobiles has been a lifelong pursuit for both myself and my wife, Dorothy.

The first car I owned, in the very early days of our courtship, was a 1923 Chevrolet Touring in very poor condition. It had a loose piston in the engine, there were no floorboards in the front, and the running boards were gone. But since I'd only paid \$12 and a .22 pump rifle for it, it really wasn't too bad a deal!

The Chevy was our "getaway car." Dorothy and I used to take long rides in this old car, which terrified her, especially in the rain because of the missing floorboards. So I borrowed \$10 from her mother and bought a used sedan body that was in pretty good condition, and we drove the car with that body on it for many more years.

It was during the early part of our life together that we began our love affair with old cars — of course, back then, they were new cars. When we were out driving, we would see these gleaming monsters that we call classics today, and we studied them. We visited the automobile showrooms and bugged the salesmen to death, until finally we got to the point where we could identify a car two blocks away and pretty well quote the specifications on it. Of course, we never in the world thought that we could own one because they were so horribly beyond our reach. Years later, when I became successful in a business I had started and we were affluent enough to afford one of those gleaming monsters we remembered so well, we found that most of them were in dreadful condition. That was the beginning of a lifelong passion to preserve the cars from our youth.

In 1956 we decided that the only way we could get one of the cars we had so admired in the 1930s was to buy the best example available and have it restored. It was around this same time that I met a used car dealer named Marshall Merkes. He had some Duesenbergs for sale in Glendale, California. I visited him and on the spot bought a 1936 Model JN Convertible Coupé. That car is still in our collection at San Sylmar. At the time, Merkes said he couldn't let me take delivery for about three weeks because he had to replace some items that had been taken off to fix up another car. I'm not sure it wasn't the other way around though. Needless to say, I was very disappointed at not being able to take the car with me to show Dorothy.

On the way home, I saw a big, black, hulking monster of a car parked at a corner filling station. Curiosity got the better of me and I stopped to inquire. It was a duPont Town Car. And it was in awful shape; its bumpers were missing and the interior fabric was flapping in the breeze. I bought it for \$500 and thought I could restore it in the three weeks Merkes needed to put the Duesenberg back together. I miscalculated slightly. Nineteen months and \$65,000 later, I finished the duPont!

Proud of our effort, we transported the duPont on a truck to the midwinter meet of the Classic Car Club of America (CCCA), which was held that year in Skytop, Pennsylvania. It was judged at 99¾ points. It lost a quarter of a point because the horn didn't blow the first time I pressed the button, but it was still the highest-point car the club had ever had up to that time.



The Nethercutt's 1928 Isotta Fraschini Tipo 8A Castagna Imperial Landaulet exits the awards ramp in 1983.

Later in 1958 we entered the duPont in the Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance. We decided to drive it to the Monterey Peninsula from Santa Monica, and in doing so, we went over a freshly oiled road, which threw oil all over the undercarriage and the back of the car. Made a pretty bad mess. Dorothy and I had no help with us, so in order to put the car into the Concours, we cleaned it up ourselves. It was at that time I discovered that floating a thin film of kerosene in the wash water helped to get rid of road film and oil. It worked out beautifully, we repolished the car, went through the judging, and took Best of Show. That was the beginning of a lifelong relationship with the Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance.

Even though we'd had the duPont restored and won with it at Pebble Beach, the duPont was not a very good driving car. It was poorly engineered, but it gave me a taste of classic car collecting, particularly since I had seen so many beautiful cars at Pebble Beach that year. I gradually accumulated many of the cars Dorothy and I had studied back in the days of our courtship. That accumulation totals slightly more than two hundred cars today, among them some of the finest classic and antique models from the world over.

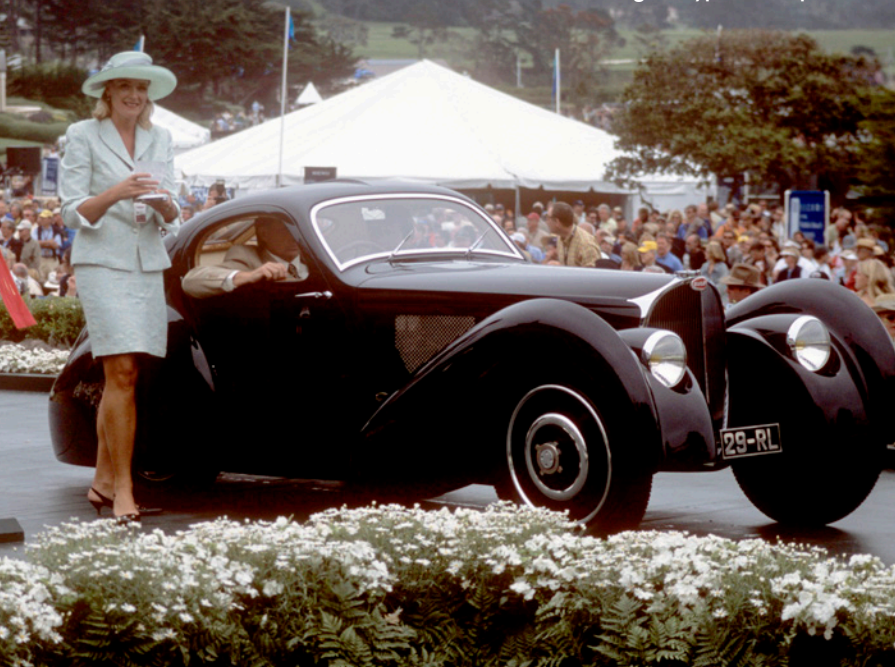
The Nethercutt's 1980 Best of Show winner, this 1933 Duesenberg SJ Rollston Arlington Torpedo Sedan, was built for the Century of Progress Exhibition of 1933-34 (the Chicago World's Fair) and quickly earned the nickname "Twenty Grand" for its exorbitant price tag.

I am by nature a perfectionist, and in my restoration of cars nothing short of perfection has ever suited me. I have instilled that same conviction in the mechanics, fabricators and artisans I employ, a fact that is reflected in the magnificent cars on display at San Sylmar and in the countless best-of-show and first-in-class awards that have been received by our cars in Antique Automobile Club of America, Classic Car Club of America and concours d'elegance competitions. That's the way I have always restored my cars, and in order to compete with me, other people have had to match that standard — a standard that some have come to call a "Pebble Beach-quality restoration."

To a great extent, that quest for the perfect restoration began in the early years of the Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance,



Sandra Button presents the 2003 French Cup to the Nethercutt's 1931 Bugatti Type 51 Coupé.



The Nethercutt's 1911 Pope-Hartford Y Seven Passenger took home both a class award and the Ansel Adams Trophy in 1999.



back in what I like to call the “white-gloved days” of Lucius Beebe. He would rub his white-gloved hands along the channels of the frame of the car, and if the gloves were soiled, the car was not of the perfect quality he expected. While Beebe’s colorful eccentricities may have been a bit outlandish, he and the ideals of the Pebble Beach Concours d’Elegance inspired in me a pursuit of perfection that has guided Nethercutt Collection restorations for many decades.


Today, as in years past, the Pebble Beach Concours d’Elegance is of fundamental importance to restorers, who are also, of course, collectors. The Pebble Beach Concours d’Elegance establishes a date by which the cars have to be finished, which gives everyone something to work toward. And of course, the competition is always keen; the finest cars in existence come to the Pebble Beach Concours. Since I first displayed the duPont at Pebble Beach in 1958, I have been privileged to win Best of Show six times. And I have only missed one Pebble Beach Concours d’Elegance in the past forty-three years — in 1966, when I was unable to attend.

In the beginning, I never had it in my mind that there was a car collection in the making. I just owned cars that I liked. That interest continued to expand, and in the early 1960s, I acquired my first antique motor car. Soon, I had acquired so many cars that I decided to establish a museum to maintain and display the collection. Today, our collection is uniquely balanced between models designed and built in the United States, Great Britain and Europe during the first half of the twentieth century. It also consists of some of the most unusual

The Nethercutt's Ruxton was on hand for our celebration of colorful Ruxtons in 2006.



motorcars ever built, a handful of which are the sole surviving examples of the marque.

Collecting and restoring old cars is more than a hobby to me, it goes far beyond that. It is a commitment to preserving the past for future generations. It is my intention that the Nethercutt Collection will be available for the public, and that it shall be preserved and perpetuated for as long as the human mind can conceive. 



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Clockwise from top left: Ralph Lauren leaps from his 1930 Mercedes-Benz SSK Roadster when it is awarded Best of Show in 1993; Jacques Harguindeguy's 1937 Delahaye 135 M Figoni & Falaschi Cabriolet takes the top prize in 2000; crowds surround Jon Shirley's 1954 Ferrari 375 MM Scaglietti Coupe after its win in 2014; Jules "J." Heumann and Lorin Tryon present the Best of Show trophy to Phil Hill's 1927 Packard 343 Eight Murphy Town Car Cabriolet in 1977.



At its core, the Pebble Beach Concours is a competition of elegance — and as with most pageants, there are stages in this contest and a countdown to the winner.

This is not a closed competition; enthusiasts can offer any car they believe to be concours worthy. Our Selection Committee then agrees to vet more formal applications from about 1,000 of these cars, choosing just over 200 to appear on our show field.

On Concours Sunday, cars first compete within their assigned class, undergoing the expert eyes of Class Judges who assess their authenticity, the quality of their restoration or preservation, and their beauty, technical excellence, and history.

Only class winners move on to the Best of Show competition, where a select group of individuals — comprised of Chief Class Judges, Honorary Judge Team leaders, Chief Judge, Chief Honorary Judge and Chairman — cast votes for the best among them.



Tensions mount as the top three to four vote-getters are recognized as the final Best of Show Nominees. Then the winner is announced amidst an explosion of confetti.

In 2021 many of our former Best of Show cars will be on hand to welcome our 70th winner. We are eager to see which car that will be!



Left: The view from backstage as confetti rains down on our 2006 winner, the 1931 Daimler Double Six 50 Corsica Drophead Coupé of Robert M. Lee.

Above: Fireworks greet the 1937 Horch 853 Voll & Ruhrbeck Sport Cabriolet of Robert M. Lee as it pulls forward to take the top prize in 2009.

Below: Emcee Derek Hill, Chairman Sandra Button, and Pebble Beach Company CEO William L. Perocchi greet The Hon. Sir Michael Kadoorie's 1931 Bentley 8 Litre Gurney Nutting Sports Tourer upon its win in 2019.





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Harry Yeaggy celebrates
the 2007 win of his 1935
Duesenberg SJ "Mormon
Meteor" Speedster.