

■ TIME MACHINES

Art & the automobile

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Autonet

Art and the Automobile is an ambitious display that took six months to put together and can be seen at the 2015 Canadian International Auto Show (CIAS) in Toronto until Feb. 22.

The show within a show is presented by the Cobble Beach Concours D'Elegance and the CBC TV show Murdoch Mysteries, and features 19 meticulously restored antique and classic cars, covering the years from 1903 to 1963.

Each car is displayed against a huge 4.3 x 6.0-metre backdrop representing a streetscape of the appropriate era. Many of the images were supplied by Murdoch Mysteries and the Toronto Archives.

In the centre of the display are paintings by famed Canadian automotive artists Ken Dallison and Jay Koka.

Four of the cars in Art and the Automobile have appeared on Murdoch Mysteries, which is set in Toronto just after the turn of the 20th century. All of them are owned by Canadian collector Ross McTavish of Waterloo, Ont.

The oldest of these is a 1903 Ford, from Henry Ford's first year in business. There's also a Ford Model N from 1907, the year before Henry launched his famous Model T, and a 1908 Reo, created by Ransom E. Olds after he lost control of his first company, Oldsmobile, to General Motors. Also from the McTavish collection is a rare 1911 Brush high-wheeler.

Among the vehicles on display from the 2014 Cobble Beach Concours ...

The Seth Taylor Steam Buggy, on loan from the Canada Science and Technology Museum in Ottawa, is as old as Confederation. Henry Seth Taylor, a Quebec jeweller and clockmaker, designed and built this Steam Buggy, which is considered the first automobile constructed in Canada. Taylor unveiled the car at the Stanstead Fall Fair in 1867 – and nobody paid it any attention until he lost control and ditched it in a creek.

The legendary Stutz Bearcat was one of the most desirable cars of its era, and still is one of the most famous. On display is a 1912 model owned by Randall Longfield of Brampton, Ont. This example was made in Wisconsin just a year after a Stutz finished 11th in the second running of the Indianapolis 500, and essentially is a road-going version of that race car.

Equally famous is the 1926 Bugatti Type 37 Grand Prix from Italy, a production car that could also be raced. It's on loan from the Canadian Automotive Museum in Oshawa, Ont.

The iconic 1929 Auburn 8-90 Boat-tail Speedster owned by Sheldon Rier of Cambridge, Ont. was built in Auburn, Indiana and was constructed just as the Roaring Twenties came to an end and the world entered the Great Depression that would ruin so many car companies, Auburn among them.

Representing the height of style during the Dirty Thirties is a 1932 Packard 900 "Shovel Nose" roadster owned by Anthony Lang of Hanover, Ont. and a "Coffin Nose" 1936 Cord 810 Phaeton

owned by Greig & Carlene Charlton of Campbellville, Ont. Packard survived the Depression; Cord did not.

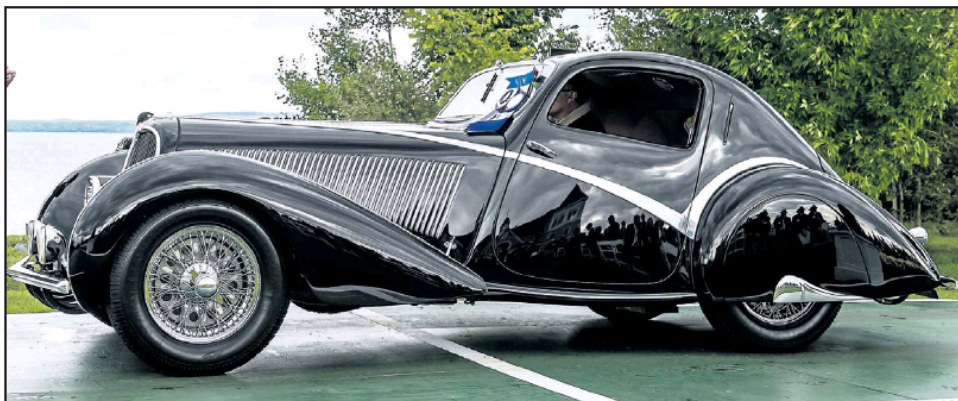
All the way from Denver, courtesy of owner Roger Willbanks, is a 1936 Delahaye Type 135 Competition Court Tear-drop Coupe. With its timeless Art Deco design, this meticulously restored coupe won Best in Show at the 2014 Cobble Beach Concours d'Elegance.

From the Chrome Era comes a 1953 Buick Skylark Convertible owned by Brent Erickson of Thamesville, Ont., and the ultimate example of the Finned Era is a 1959 Cadillac El Dorado Seville courtesy of Gary Nolan from Aurora, Ont.

The 1962 Jaguar XK-E Series 1 is one of the most beautiful cars of all time, with an example in the permanent collection of the Museum of Modern Art in New York City. The one on display in Toronto is owned by Gil Melo of Cambridge, Ont.

Three concepts from Detroit's Big Three round out the display - the 1959 Cadillac Cyclone from the General Motors Heritage Centre in Detroit, the 1962 Chrysler Turbine from the Walter P. Chrysler Museum in Auburn Hills, Mich., and the 1963 Ford Mustang II Prototype from the Detroit Historical Society.

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