

GREY COUNTY GREATNESS

The 2014 Cobble Beach Concours d'Elegance

STORY & PHOTOGRAPHY BY JORDAN LENSSEN

The pinnacle of automotive history congregated once again for the September 13-14 weekend at the Cobble Beach Golf Resort for the second annual Cobble Beach Concours d'Elegance. Displaying the rarest and most prized automotive possessions in support of the SunnyBrook Helipad campaign, Cobble Beach President and founder Rob McLeese built on the massive successes of 2013, which raised over \$50,000 to construct the roof-mounted helipad, aimed at cutting critical transport times and ultimately helping to save lives.

A win in itself, visitors to the Grey County resort were once again treated to a Concours of proportions unlike any other in Canada. Repeatedly referred to as the Canadian Pebble Beach, the manicured grounds, the setting on the shores of Georgian Bay, the fine food, amenities and vehicles make it deserving as such. As added reassurance, the 46-person judging panel is made up of credited historians, collectors, restorers and judges from the most elite concours. This includes returning Chief Judge John Carlson, who has scrutinized the

best as a president and chief judge of the National Association of Automobile Clubs of Canada, a judge with the Classic Car Club of America, and a chief class judge at Pebble, to name a small few.

This year, McLeese and his staff elected for some major additions to encompass what the weekend is about. Part of that plan was the micro car and museum classes, offering onlookers a rare and fun look at automotive history.

A special addition was made late in preparations to get the only Ford Mustang II Prototype on loan from the Detroit Historical Society. It was joined by eight other museum cars under the front tent, which, albeit tight, was humbling in such company. From Canada's first car - the 1867 Henry Seth Taylor Steam Buggy, built solely by a Quebec jeweler and watchmaker of the same name - to the 1939 McLaughlin Buick 4929, custom built in Canada for the Royal Tour, it's all here.

"It's hard to imagine, but somehow we've managed to surpass last year's show," McLeese says. "The event this year was truly second to none. We had incredible judges, a fantastic lineup

of cars, the Porsche test drives and we recruited some of the best talent in the industry for some very unique discussions on car collecting."

McLeese is referring to the two new Saturday seminars, each led by some of the most respected names in the collector car community.

The first seminar, "The Generational Shift in Car Collecting," hosted by Hagerty Insurance and panelists Robert Sass and Dave McKinney, focused on the slowing market for post-war vehicles in favour of European and Japanese imports like the BMW E30 M3 and Acura NSX. While blue chip collector prospects include the Mercedes-Benz 300SL Gullwing (and growing attraction for the convertible) and the 1961-66 Lincoln

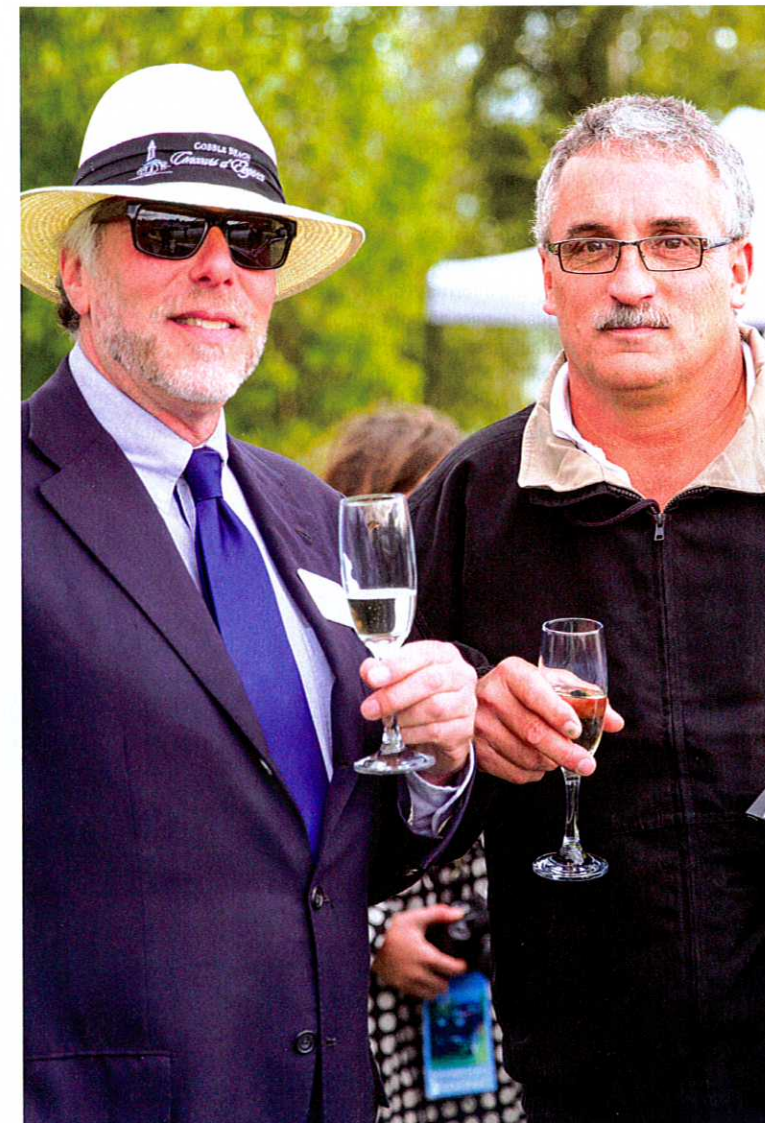
Continental, the baby boomer generation is aging, and it is reflecting in the cars that are deemed valuable.

"The old boomers are slowly giving way to the generation Xers," Sass says. "They're now making the money and are able to afford the cars they had posted on their walls as kids. And someday, that will shift to the millennials, who grew up with video games like Gran Turismo and cars like the Nissan GT-R."

"Children's aspirational cars today become collectors tomorrow."

Sass and McKinney say the disconnect between younger collectors and older cars is one reason they're seeing trends away from traditional mainstays like the '55 and '57 Bel-Air.

It's a representation, but not a defini-





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tive one, that is slowly causing the market to shift. Cars like the Bugatti Type-35, Lamborghini Miura, Gullwing, Ford GT40 and more current models like the McLaren F1 and Ford GT will surely stand the test of time as collectibles due to their rarity and craftsmanship.

Likely joining that list will be the 720-horsepower carbon fibre Pagani Huayra (WHy-Rah), and Lamborghini Aventador Roadster, which does 0-100 in 2.9 seconds. Sitting next to them on the Georgian Bay coast was a humble McLaren 650S.

In the second seminar, David Cooper of Cooper Technica hosted a European classics seminar, also discussing the artistic concepts and manufacturing techniques behind the long, streamlined Saoutchik bodies made famous by the French coachbuilder, which, before closing its doors in 1955, styled some of the most notable cars for Bugatti [Type 57], Cadillac [Series 62 Three Position Drophead] and Delahaye [175 S Roadster, 175 Coupe De Ville, 235 Cabriolet]. It was an interesting introspective into some of the most beautifully-sculpted and beautifully-named cars of all time.

The "French curve" theme carried into the finale of the Concours, as Roger Willbanks' 1936 Delahaye Type 135 Competition Court Teardrop Coupe (inset, second page) captured the award for 'Best in Show.' One of only three in existence, the 135 also features numerous competition and exclusive enhancements, including a four-speed manual transmission, racing-style fuel tank and exclusive, low fender-mounted headlamps for racing in various conditions.

With over 150 cars and upward of 4,000+ attendees at the main event on Sunday, the second running of the Cobble Beach Concours was, somehow, a triumph over last year's blockbuster inaugural event. Educating and informative, it offers a rare opportunity to speak with judges, owners and often, builders of cars requiring the utmost meticulousness, again raising money for a worthwhile cause. So, how will next year's event match up?

"We'll just have to wait and see!" McLeese says with a smile. We already have September 12, 2015 circled on our calendar. 📅