

CLASSIC DRIVER

Concorso d'Eleganza Villa d'Este 2009



The Mille Miglia and Villa D'Este are worlds apart. While the field of Mille Miglia cars is similar from year to year, a different selection of rare and beautiful marques appears each time at the famous European concours.

In 2009, sunshine and showers greeted the guests at **Villa d'Este**, along with more than eight decades of automobiles on the terrace of the **Grand Hotel**. The overall concours winner was ex-Microsoft president **Jon Shirley**, whose beautiful **1938 Alfa Romeo 8C 2900B** scooped both the private show on Saturday and the public day on Sunday. Awarded Best of Show by the jury, Shirley claimed the coveted Coppa d'Oro. In its day, this elegant **Alfa 'Due Milla Nove'** had a similar value to that of a **Bugatti Veyron** or **McLaren F1** today; only, it could be argued, it boasted a touch more elegance.



The jury, including **Lord March**, had a particularly tough time picking its favourites this year. The display on the banks of Lake Como seduced not only with its automotive shapes, colours and sounds, but with the individual stories behind each motor car, revealed to a cosmopolitan audience by multilingual host [Simon Kidston](#).



There, for example, was a **Ferrari 250 GT Lusso** in the unusual colour of **Marrone Metallic**. It is only recently that the history of this luxurious variant of the legendary **Ferrari 250 GT** racing car came to light. An American collector acquired the car in 1997 and began to investigate its history. It transpired that the Ferrari was delivered in 1963 by **Hollywood Sportscars** in **Beverly Hills** to none other than Mister super-cool **Steve McQueen**.



Meanwhile, there's the history of the **Bugatti 57C Aravis** with its **Letourneur & Marchand** bodywork, belonging to the Belgian collector, **Albert Lemaire**. This is a car that has belonged to the Lemaire family for 70 years; the uncle of the present owner bought the Bugatti in 1939, directly from the factory. The confusion of war saw the car hidden, with its body completely dismantled. Then, when the war ended, the uncle rebuilt the Bugatti and gave it to today's owner for his 18th birthday! – the gift of a lifetime.



This anecdote is one of many stories from the 100-year-old history of the **Bugatti** marque. To celebrate this anniversary, four special-edition **Veyron** models were shown in Sunday's concours at the **Villa Erba**. The four **Bugatti Veyron Centenaires** were presented in the racing colours of four nations: blue for France, red for Italy, green for England and white for Germany.





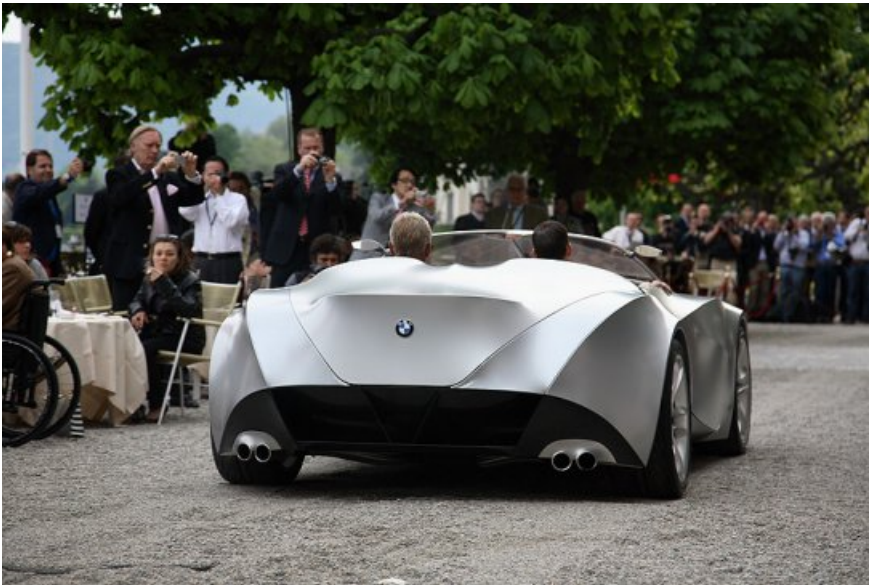
As the rain fell, **BMW** raised spirits with a special exhibition of its **Roadster** legends spanning the last 75 years. The historic section of the Concorso's sponsor – **BMW Classic** – presented seven open sportscars from the **315/1** to the current **Z4**. Naturally, the **BMW 507** was present in this line of ancestors.



Protected from the weather, the **Prototype Museum** in Hamburg brought along several exhibits from its recent 'Streamlining' exhibition, while (as we reported last week) **Morgan** presented the new [**Aero SuperSports**](#).



The **Villa d'Este** concours looks to the future, as well as the past, and manufacturers both large and small brought new studies to the event. This year, **Dr. Ulrich Bez** presented the **Aston Martin One-77** concept, while guests also saw the **Fisker Karma** and the **Rinspeed iChange**.





And surely the presence of **Bertone's** brilliant green **1969 BMW 2800** concept helped the viewing public to believe that the concept cars of today will be on show as vibrant classics at the 2065 concours?

It remains only to say that **Concorso d'Eleganza Villa d'Este** is one of the great events in the automobile calendar, where each year sees an ever-more outstanding selection of cars against the backdrop of the breathtaking Lake Como.













































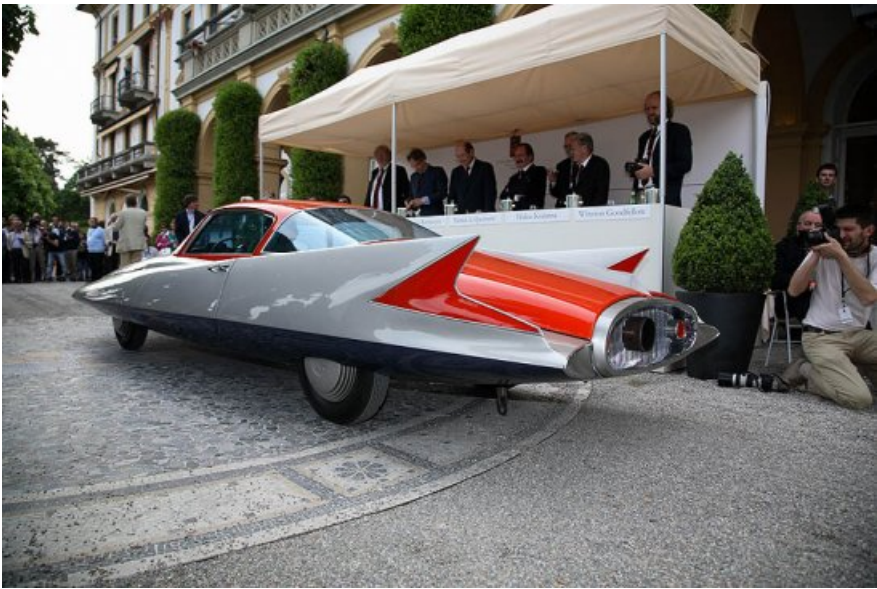


















Text: [Classic Driver](#)

Photos: [Nanette Schärf](#) / Jan Baedeker

Video by: Jan Baedeker

Video presentation: [Simon Kidston](#) / Carl Gustav Magnusson

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