

CLASSIC DRIVER

The 2012 Goodwood Festival of Speed

Lead

A quite superb Lotus-themed Gerry Judah sculpture was the centrepiece of this year's Goodwood Festival. As a backdrop to another three days of on-track demonstrations and seriously fast timed runs, the curving 'knot' adorned with classic Lotus single-seaters was one of the best yet.

And the action, just 100 metres or so away on the hillclimb, matched it superlatively, giving what might well be 200,000 visitors to this year's Festival something to smile about, admire, or just go "Cor, look at *THAT!*"

While many of the spectators were there to see the likes of Lewis Hamilton and Sebastian Vettel – the latter behind the wheel of both his F1 car and the latest high-performance Infiniti – do their smoky, tyre-burning stuff, there was much for the more considered visitor.



There were exhibits ranging from the heaviest ever seen at the Festival (the 1920 LNWR Royal Special Saloon railway coach in the Cartier 'Style et Luxe' concours d'elegance), to racing bikes and a wonderful selection of Group C cars. The Goodwood Events team had really pushed the boat out here, with the Porsche Museum bringing over the actual Rothmans 962C that won Le Mans in 1987. This was joined by a brace of Silk Cut Jaguars and Lancia-Ferraris – a wonderful era, to which the 2012 Festival truly did justice.



For those of us in Europe it's a rare sight to see uniquely American cars such as the Greenwood 'Spirit of Le Mans' Chevrolet Corvette. The 221mph entry to the 1976 24 Hours was joined by other strangers to European shores such as a Shelby team-entry Ford Mustang Trans Am car and the Group 44, Bob Tullius Jaguar E-type V12 Roadster.

Visitors from across the Atlantic, though, couldn't have failed to be interested in things either very German (the Zakspeed DRM Ford Capri, driven by its original pilot, Klaus Ludwig) or very English (the late, oh-so-great Gerry Marshall's racing Vauxhall Firenzas).





New car debuts included a heavily disguised F-type Jaguar, McLaren's revised (and epically fast) MP4-12C and the wonderfully Gallic Alpine A110-50 concept coupé. Factory test drivers were on hand to explore the limits of the demanding, flint-walled track in the latest Aston Martin (V12 Zagato and all-new Vanquish), Ferrari (458 Spider and California 30) and Bentley (Continental GT Speed) supercars.

Rally fans were treated to the sight of new and classic competition cars put through their paces on the off-road stage at the top of the hill. Elsewhere, on the Friday, Bonhams conducted [one of the most successful collectors' car sales ever held in the UK](#), grossing £22m, a figure that included [£5,041,500 for the famous ex-Birkin Bentley single-seater](#).

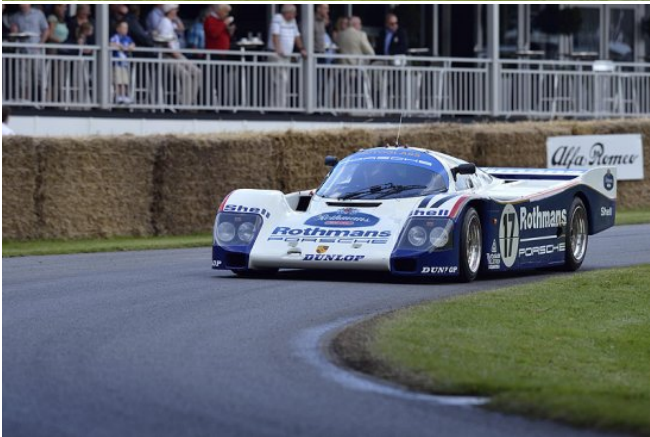


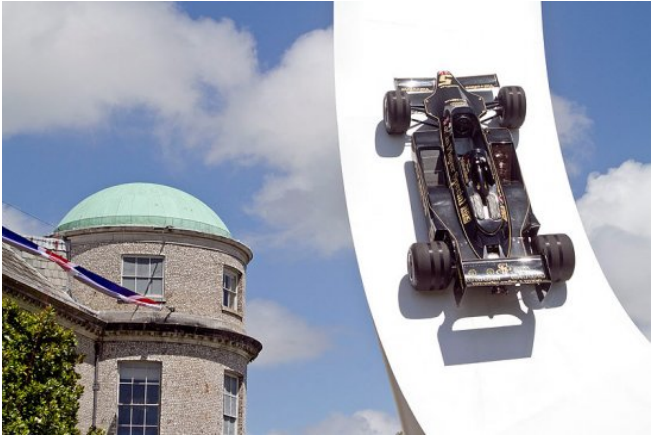
The theme for this year's concours d'elegance was a celebration of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II's diamond jubilee. A seemingly unprepossessing collection of stolid regal runabouts was, in the metal, utterly brilliant. I loved the faux-woodwork on the Ford V8 Pilot Shooting Brake (lent by Her Majesty, no less, as were many other exhibits), and how we Brits sympathised with Mercedes-Benz when we learnt that its 1965 600 Pullman Landaulet had 'failed to proceed' (in Rolls-Royce speak) when on royal duties in the 1960s.

It was – like everything else at Goodwood this year – all great fun, and the Cartier Style et Luxe was, fittingly, won by Prince Charles's 1969 Aston Martin DB6 Mk II Volante, the automotive star of Prince William's wedding earlier this year.











Photos: Roger Dixon/Newspress

Gallery

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