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Shattering the Peace: Chelsea AutoLegends 2012

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From Veyrons to Miuras, from Enzos to SWBs, last Sunday saw the grounds of London's famous Royal Hospital, Chelsea filled with exotic and historic supercars, writes Roger Dixon.

For this, the third staging of the Chelsea AutoLegends event, the organising team had gathered an ever-more impressive and eclectic mix of the automotive world's finest.

Arranged by various motoring themes, the lawns and gardens of the iconic Grade 1 listed building were a perfect setting for the Le Mans, 70s Cool, Stars' Cars and other displays. Equally enticing sections came in the form of Group B Rally cars, the Ace Café motorcycle feature and USA muscle cars.

Fast ladies were at Chelsea in their droves (and I'm not referring to the Bunny Girls who graced the proceedings), with members of the British Women Racing Drivers' Club celebrating their 50th anniversary. Many of the club members - including British Female Rally Champion Louise Cook and American Le Mans Series veteran Liz Halliday - took part in a supercar run through the streets of West London on Sunday morning, finishing in a multi-million-pound convoy at the gates of the Royal Hospital. Grouped around sponsor H.R.Owen's brand-new Bugatti Veyron 16.4 Grand Sport Vitesse for a photo-call, the ladies were asked to keep clear of the car in case they damaged the paintwork. It seems that, in Chelsea, diamonds really are a girl's best friend.



While a personal favourite was the 1933 J4 MG on display at the Vintage Sports Car Club section, it was possible to view what was arguably the complete opposite of this little gem at the Techno Park, in the shape of the World Land Speed Record-attempting Bloodhound SSC.



At 4.00pm, the ex-Nelson Piquet F1 Benetton B190 was fired up, filling the grounds of the Royal Hospital with the sound of its Ford HB4 V8, signalling the end of the show and allowing the scarlet-clad Chelsea Pensioners to return to their well-deserved, peaceful existence. Till next time, anyway.





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