

CLASSIC DRIVER

The highlights of the 2014 Schloss Bensberg Classics

Lead
From an Alfa Romeo 8C 2300/2600 to a Porsche 550-1500 RS Spyder – at this year’s Schloss Bensberg Classics, visitors had the chance to marvel at the highlights of automotive history. In splendid weather, some of the world’s rarest cars were assembled to compete for the coveted ‘Best of Show’ award...

There are few events in Germany where you can get so close to such rare cars as you can at Schloss Bensberg Classics. The event isn’t like Villa d’Este on the shores of Lake Como, or Pebble Beach on the beautiful Californian coastline. But the baroque palace possesses a certain charm, albeit in a completely different way. Considering this is only the sixth running of the classic rendezvous, it’s surprising to see such an impressive collection of cars participating in the concours d’elegance, the event’s main focal point.

The most beautiful of its time



At dawn on Sunday, the hustle and bustle begins in the courtyard of the Grand Hotel. The grass is mown and watered one final time, so as to retain its luscious green shade during the day’s intense 30-degree heat, and in the distance a low rumble can be heard. Is it thunder? A quick look to the skies dispels that fear. The noise is actually from the big V8 of a [Duesenberg SJ](#), just arriving in Bensberg. Gradually, all 43 concours entrants filter onto the lawn. At 9am sharp, after the confusion about where each classic should reside has died down, visitors begin to arrive.





And what a breathtaking sight it all is. On the freshly soaked lawn sit many automotive rarities that even classic car connoisseurs seldom get to see. From the 1923 [Bugatti](#) Type 27 'Brescia Modifiée', with its distinctive boat tail, to the 1971 [Maserati](#) Ghibli SS, presented in fantastic condition. Each classic, standing before the glamorous castle, is among the most beautiful of its time. One thing is clear – the judging panel, led by Dr. Franz-Josef Paefgen, faces a very difficult decision in choosing the 'Best of Show'.

Jacky Ickx in demand



As the sun slowly follows its course through the sky, the small three-man judging groups wander from car to car. In assessing the cars, originality and the background story play a key role, but so does functionality. Therefore each participant must prove that his or her classic can start and run without problems. It's a nerve-racking process for the owners – beads of sweat are visible, running down their foreheads. It's fascinating to see what effect an engine bursting into life has on the crowd, too. The Ferrari 250 MM Vignale Spider has barely ignited when spectators swarm around the pretty convertible. For the Belgian racing legend and concours judge Jacky Ickx, his job is regularly interrupted by fans asking for autographs and photos.



Despite the distractions, Jacky fulfils his obligation and by the afternoon the 'Best of Show' has been decided. Although Egon Zweimüller's sensational Alfa Romeo 8C 2300/2600 came seriously close, it was narrowly beaten by [Andreas Mohringer's Maserati 150 GT Fantuzzi Spider Prototipo](#). The Maserati's victory is fitting in this, the Trident marque's centenary year. As usual, the audience was given the chance to vote for its favourite – its 'Best of Show' fell to Ralf Ehlen's Porsche 356 Pre A Speedster, which proved immensely popular throughout the event. All other class winners can be found at www.sbc2013.de.

Extra exhibitions



In addition to the dedicated [Rallye Historique](#), there were two special exhibitions nestled in the shady palace grounds. 'Vive Le Mans' was particularly impressive, with a selection of important racing cars from the endurance classic's history, including the Bentley Boys' 1929 Speed Six and Porsche's current 919 Hybrid. It was perhaps inevitable that Le Mans legend Jacky Ickx would take the opportunity to look around.

Gallery

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