
A battle royal at Blenheim for Salon Privé 2015

05 September 2015 | Alex Easthope

A relaxed atmosphere, a beautiful (new) location, a fabulous selection of classic cars and, mercifully, dry weather combined to make the 10th Salon Privé an event worthy of its premier status...

For 2015, Salon Privé was relocated to Blenheim Palace, a grand venue that couldn't be more ideal for hosting a beauty pageant, both in the automotive and human senses.

Hard-fought competition





Situated on the South Lawn, the Concours d'Elegance was arguably the finest (and most hard-fought) yet, the choice of 'Best of Show' a responsibility that we're sure hung heavy on the shoulders of the discerning judges (led by Derek Bell, no less). Ultimately, the prize went to the JD Classics-prepared Jaguar XK120 'Jabbeke', owned by Kurt Engelhorn, while Peter Mullins' opulent Figoni et Falaschi-bodied Delahaye 135MS Cabriolet, known as 'The Star of India', rightfully earned the coveted 'People's Choice' - it's an outstanding example of art deco design.

Food for thought



As we tucked into our lobster lunch (washed down with a flute of champagne, naturally), we mulled over our favourites. The crudeness of the (class-winning) Lancia Sport Prototipo Zagato was a refreshing change from the abundant polished lacquer and chrome elsewhere on the lawn, while in the 'Wind in Your Hair' class, the simple yet remarkably charming 1955 Goldmanini vied with the Cisitalia 202 SMM 'Nuvolari' Spyder for our affections. The latter was the first prototype built, differing from other 202 SMMs in several significant ways (namely a steel body, rather than aluminium). "When you need to come out of a corner quickly, you can downshift to third but all you do is make more noise," quipped its custodian.

Back to the future



Modern supercars and concepts play a prominent role at Salon Privé, too – Saturday sees the ‘Prestige and Performance’ competition taking place, for post-1975 supercars, while throughout the event, cars such as the McLaren P1 GTR, Ferrari FXX K and Aston Martin Vulcan were real crowd-pleasers. James Bond’s new Aston Martin DB10 was, unsurprisingly, stunning, and we’re pleased to confirm that the new Ford GT concept looks just as spectacular in the flesh as it does in the photos (the judges clearly thought so, too, as it won the ‘Concept Cars & Prototypes’ class).

Excellent exhibits





In case the excitement of the concours (or indeed the champagne) went to your head and the impulses kicked in, several dealers – many of whom list their wares in the Classic Driver Market – were on hand. [Nicholas Mee](#), [Joe Macari](#), [Tom Hartley Snr](#) and [Hexagon Classics](#) all had cars worthy of the concours itself, let alone the trade stands. And of course, Silverstone Auctions held its sale on Friday evening, at which Classic Driver was invited behind the scenes.

Photos: Tim Brown for Classic Driver © 2015

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