

CLASSIC DRIVER

Rubbish cars reign supreme at the hilarious Concours d’Lemons

Lead
Celebrating the ‘oddball, mundane and truly awful’ and featuring such classes as ‘Rueful Britannia’, ‘Needlessly Complex Italian’ and ‘Swedish Meatballs’, the Concours d’Lemons has been a Car Week fixture for the past decade. And you thought the collector car world had lost its sense of humour?

The annual Concours d’Lemons in Seaside is a Car Week staple for very good reason: priceless classics on the street, telephone number-like auction bids and panama hats pervade the Monterey Peninsula for seven days each summer, so it’s nice to be brought back down to earth in such a humorous yet respectful manner.



A sort of love fest for the quirky and the terrible, the Concours d’Lemons brings together cars, trucks and other moving objects that are generally genuinely awful and rusting themselves into the ground, and those that are slightly less awful but in fabulous condition or have been audaciously modified.



It’s a really fun mix that this year included an impressive line-up of AMC Gremlins, a utopian love bus, a rare Yugo convertible billed as ‘The Ultimate Chick Magnet’ and a classic Mercedes hearse complete with coffin and cash-clinching corpse. And the bizarrely proud owners really get into the spirit of things, often donning outlandish outfits to match their cars.



It’s not like they’re gunning for the prizes, either, which have often been sourced last minute from a supermarket around the corner – think unlabelled vodka, soy sauce and boiled vegetables.



The awards ceremony itself was hilarious, the speaker making irresistible comparisons to Pebble Beach - "You certainly won't see that at Pebble tomorrow," he was heard to say a number of times. Perhaps inevitably, the coveted 'Worst of Show' prize was awarded to the spectacularly bad Ferrari Enzo replica.

A bit of fun before the serious business commences at Pebble Beach tomorrow, Concours d'Lemons was probably the most enjoyable event of the week so far for us. That the hootie hullabaloo has spawned off-shoot events in Europe and Australia is hardly surprising.



It was also great to see an ex-Le Mans Bentley 3 Litre, a genuinely exquisite motor car that's poised to enter the Concours d'Elegance on Sunday, taking part - should it win some silverware at Pebble, it may well become the first car in history to compete and win in both the Concours d'Elegance and Concours d'Lemons in the same weekend.



It just goes to show that one, cars are a hobby that should never be taken too seriously, and two, you needn't own a gleaming classic worth millions to make people smile.

Photos: Rémi Dargegen for Classic Driver © 2019

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