

# CLASSIC DRIVER

## These were the stars of Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance 2019

### Lead

For the 69th time, Monterey Car Week culminated in the Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance, an unrivalled automotive beauty pageant that always attracts cars we've simply never seen before...



Prince Birabongse Bhanudej Bhanubandh is better known in Europe as Prince Bira. The grandson of the king of Siam (now Thailand) was sent to Eton as a teenager to be educated, and he soon developed a liking for the extravagant style of England. Bill Heinecke, who's lived in Bangkok for more than 60 years, enthusiastically pointed to the tiger, which watches over the bright blue Bentley 4½ Litre with which Prince Bira once raced through the streets of Florence. When asked if he had any chance of winning at the prestigious Pebble Beach concours, the American replied: "Winning is not a must for me. In my opinion, Pebble Beach is a place where automobiles can tell their fantastic stories. This place is simply magical."



He had a point – on Concours Sunday, the Pebble Beach golf course transforms into a place beyond reality. The atmosphere is especially surreal during the morning's 'Dawn Patrol' when, shortly after sunrise, huge headlights break through the Monterey mist that drifts in from the Pacific and owners, judges, journalists, and enthusiasts swarm onto the 18th fairway like busy bees.

Once again, the organisers managed to assemble a unique line-up of the world's rarest and most desirable motor cars. Showstoppers this year included traditional heavy hitters such as the gold Ferrari 250 GT California Spider and Goliath Mercedes-Benz 540K, and lesser-known – yet no less extraordinary – cars such as the Ghia-bodied Alfa Romeo 6C 2500 SS Supergioello Coupé and Porsche 356 Carrera GTL Abarth. Miraculously, the latter was almost completely destroyed in a fire earlier this year, so to see it purring across the rostrum was particularly special.



The Pacific stillness was disturbed by the infernal howl of a turbine engine, but there were no planes or helicopters to be seen. Nope, this year the Austrian collector Andreas Mohringer exhibited a fascinating racing car. Powered by a deafening gas turbine, the Howmet TX made its debut at the 24 Hours of Le Mans in 1968. The esteemed designer of the McLaren F1 and honorary judge at this year's Pebble Beach Concours Gordon Murray was particularly impressed by the sheer power this compact racing car radiated. Seeing off other prototypes such as James Glickenhaus's jewel-like ex-Maranello Concessionaires Ferrari 412P, the Howmet deservedly won the Chairman's Trophy.



The quartet of genuine Bugatti Type 59s was a sight we certainly don't expect to see again in a hurry. The uniting of the four racing legends, which have never been seen together before and formed their own class in the concours, was a personal dream come true for the Bugatti expert and Pebble Beach judge Julius Kruta. The Type 59 owned by the famous designer Marc Newson was driven by René Dreyfus in four Grands Prix in the 1934 season and claimed Bugatti's final victory at Spa-Francorchamps. It was joined by Ralph Lauren's type 59, which was raced by the legendary Tazio Nuvolari at Monaco in 1935.



Of course, Pebble Beach marked the 100th anniversary of Zagato in fine fashion. The class formed especially for cars designed by the illustrious design house was an



impressive journey through its pre- and post-War history. Competing against the fierce competition of Zagato-clothed Fiats, Maseratis and Ferraris, the race-proven Aston Martin DB4GT Zagato belonging to David MacNeil was more than able to hold its own. The proud owner shares his passion and enthusiasm with his children Roderick, Cooper and Devon. When asked for what makes Pebble Beach such a special occasion, daughter Devon had a surprising answer. "For me personally, Monterey Car Week and the Pebble Beach Concours are the times when the whole family comes together," she replied. "And it's great to enjoy these wonderful cars with so many like-minded people."



There was probably no wider smile at Pebble Beach than Sir Michael Kadoorie's - the Hong Kong-based collector won the coveted 'Best of Show' trophy with his handsome 1931 Bentley 8 Litre Gurney Nutting Sports Tourer. The result was also a very welcome surprise for Bentley, which is celebrating its 100th anniversary this year and has not taken the top gong at Pebble Beach since 1965.

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Gallery

















































































































































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