

Northwest Big Three

Three big classic vehicle events in three weekends



Kirkland Concours d'Elegance

Arturo Keller's 1939 Mercedes 540 prowled off with a win in the pre-war Mercedes Class and Best of Show at the Kirkland Concours d'Elegance.



1956 Dodge Custom Royal Lancer LaFemme.



Steamworks Concours

1929 Franklin 130 Convertible Coupe.

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When the great classics and exotics exit the Monterey Peninsula in August, enthusiasts often assume the West Coast collector-vehicle concours season has come to a close. Up in the Pacific Northwest, however, September is always a month to remember with three important classic auto shows running on successive weekends.

The first weekend of the month finds hobbyists descending on Parkland, Washington, off the southern end of Tacoma, for LeMay America's Car Museum Open House. For the 32nd year, what was the world's largest private automotive collection—owned by garbage tycoons Harold and Nancy LeMay—and now operated as

the non-profit America's Car Museum, opens up to the public its many buildings literally filled to the rafters with thousands of vehicles at the LeMay house and current museum headquarters at the old Marymount Academy.

This year, America's Car Museum decided to augment its usual casual show and shine by starting an additional judged event. The plan, according to well-respected chief judge Gerald Greenfield, is that with the completion of the permanent museum facility in downtown Tacoma in the coming years, the event will become the largest and most diverse judged show in the world.

The field included 12 judged classes of

cars and trucks, plus hundreds of exhibition-only entrants that included the large featured group of Chrysler and De Soto Airflows. Judged cars ranged from a brand-new 2010 Camaro to much older and rarer machinery, such as a meticulously restored 1927 Moon roadster owned by a distant relative of its manufacturer's founder, Joseph Moon.

Unfortunately, heavy early morning rain more suited for an exhibition of classic arks scared off a good number of entrants. Seattle's Dennis Daugs, however, used the opportunity to test the wipers while driving to the show in the ex-Lance Reventlow 1955 Mercedes 300 SL Gullwing—one of 29 lightweight compe-

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The LeMay Museum brought its 1948 Tucker to compete in the Orphan Class at the Kirkland Concours.



1980 Rolls-Royce Griffon-powered Miss Budweiser in which Dean Chenoweth was killed.



Mercedes 1937 540K Cabriolet owned by Ray Scherr.



James Raisbeck's 1953 Chrysler Ghia Special.

tition cars. Daug's recently acquired car was a treat to a number of show-goers who remembered fondly seeing the car during its previous local ownership in the 1960s prior to spending much of the last three decades in Europe.

If LeMay was about diversity and quantity, then Vancouver, British Columbia's, seventh annual Steamworks Concours was about rarity and nonconformity. This event lined roughly 100 invited cars, trucks and motorcycles down Water Street in the city's historic Gas Light District. While most of the show field came from the Vancouver area, the event always attracts classics from south of the border, such as an air-cooled 1929 Frank-

lin 130 Convertible Coupe brought from Seattle for this year's event.

Competition Cars and Vintage Hot Rods were both featured classes. Standing out among the high-performance track vehicles was what must be the best-restored 1959 Berkeley on the planet—its 12-inch Michelin tires looking more like something one would dunk in morning coffee than gear on which to carve an apex. Another case of an unusual car from 1959 treated to an atypical level of restoration was a pastel green over white Borgward Isabella coupe.

Much of the love from class judges and event organizers went to the breathtaking 1939 Lagonda 12-cylinder drophead

coupe owned by Vancouver residents Bill Holt and Liz Haan. Another well-deserved winner was Cheryl Martin-Hazenbergs's bright red 1969 Ford Mustang—seemingly a plain-Jane notchback coupe until the hood scoop gave it away as one of 34 428 Super Cobra Jet ram-air four-speed hardtops (and one of just a few with a sport suspension).

No rest for automotive fans and journalists alike, because after another work week it was time for the seventh annual Kirkland Concours d'Elegance. In its short life, the Kirkland Concours has developed a reputation as the Pebble Beach of the Northwest. With its scenic location across from Seattle on the shores

LeMay America's Car Museum



Dennis Daug's ex-Lance Reventlow 1955 300 SL Alloy-bodied lightweight.



Chrysler and De Soto Airflows were featured as an exhibition class.



1927 Moon once owned by founder Joseph Moon, and now owned by a distant relative.

of Lake Washington, honorary chief judge Edward Hermann, a team of class judges that reads like a who's-who of other well-known concours' judges, and its unmatched ability to create a field of rare and valuable vehicles from the likes of Petersen and Nethercutt, the description is suitable. For six out of seven years, even the weather has been California-like, with this day offering blue skies and near 80-degree temperatures.

As in past years, organizers managed to fill the field with something for every taste. In Antiques, Bob Sullivan showed his totally untouched, original 1905 Stanley. LeMay America's Car Museum brought its 1948 Tucker to compete in the Orphan Class. Rosso Corsa gushed from

the Pininfarina-penned curves of the 288 GTO, F40, Enzo and other dream cars in the Modern Ferrari Supercar group. Fans of microcars were treated to a special class boasting gleaming examples of Messerschmitt, Isetta, Fiat 600 Multipla, and even a perfectly restored Honda 600 roadster with its chain-driven rear wheels.

Each year, Kirkland leverages its lake-front setting with a class for vintage boats, this year choosing to line the docks with classic unlimited hydroplanes. Legends such as the 1937 Ventnor, 1962 Miss Bardahl and the restored 1980 Miss Budweiser in which driver Dean Chenoweth was killed all floated in Lake Washington together for the first time. The occasional

roar of 3,000-horsepower Rolls-Royce Merlin and Griffon engines could be heard from blocks away.

The featured automotive marque at Kirkland this year was Mercedes, with classes for 300 SL and pre-WWII Classics. In the well-represented 300 SL class, car-enthusiast-extraordinaire (and one of the hobby's nicest guys and greatest ambassadors) Bruce Meyer took first place with his 100-point black Gullwing. In the pre-war Mercedes class, Arturo Keller's art deco 1939 540 Autobahn Kurier rose above the six other rolling sculptures—each worth more than an average suburban subdivision—to win the blue ribbon. Deservedly so, it also went on to earn the coveted best in show trophy. ☘



1957 GMC Suburban.



1959 Borgward Isabella.



1920 Indian Scout.



1932 Ford roadster.



Springfield-built Rolls-Royce.



1959 Berkeley.



1939 Lagonda 12 DHC.