

A magic weekend at Monterey

World-class cars, stars converge on Pebble Beach

By Burge Hulett

More or less across town from Laguna Seca is the Pebble Beach Lodge, and on Sunday of Monterey's historic car weekend, 12,000 to 14,000 spectators frolicked among some of the world's most elegant and expensive used cars.

The 43rd Pebble Beach *Concours d'Elegance* is as much an institution at tony Pebble Beach as the Bing Crosby Golf Classic. The Pebble Beach *Concours* is the oldest in the West and attracts the best both in quality of entrant and spectator. Commercial messages are not allowed, and the few companies represented do so with the subtlety of a good waiter in a four-star restaurant.

Mercedes-Benz of North America has long been an active behind-the-scenes participant at Pebble Beach. It's their kind of event, attended by their kind of people, and the *Concours* class of pre-war Mercedes-Benz cars is judged by a team led by no less an automotive persona than ex-World Driving Champion Phil Hill. Aside from that, and a few discreetly expensive dinners and hospitality suites, no sponsor's message interrupts the live music drifting from the balcony of the lodge.

For people watchers the scene is as worthwhile as it is for those who came only for the 125 cars on display. Artist Ansel Adams couldn't make it this year, but Dennis the Menace creator Hank Ketcham did, along with filmmaker John Frankenheimer, publisher Otis Chandler, Mercedes-Benz of North America chief Marcus Clary, Briggs Cunningham, author Leon Mandel and Doug and Sonja Mockett, making a rare public appearance from their secluded Manhattan Beach enclave.

Each of the 12 classes in the *Concours* has its own team, usually led by an acknowledged expert in each category. For example, auto expert Clyde Wade for Harrah's Auto Collection in Reno, Nevada, led the team for Vintage Cars. Wade provided much of the expertise working for and with the late Bill Harrah assembling the world's largest auto collection.

Phil Hill, one of the busiest men of

the weekend, also judges at Pebble Beach when he isn't driving cars as exotic and rare as the Auto Union. Aside from an international racing career that resulted in a World Driving Championship in 1961, Phil Hill won the first Pebble Beach Road Race (now discontinued) in 1950 and repeated in '53 and '55. He has also taken best-of-show honors at the *Concours* in 1955 and 1977 with his 1927 Packard 343 Murphy Convertible Sedan. When Hill isn't at Monterey he is a partner in the automotive restoration business.

This year, in deference to Porsche, there was a class just for the German sports cars. Otto Mathe, from Innsbruck, Austria, couldn't attend in person, so he lent the Porsche factory his 1939 Porsche 60 K 10 Coupe, the same one he bought from the first Dr. Porsche and has never sold. Mathe, now in his 70s, drives the car frequently, and while it didn't win its class, it was one of the more interesting cars on display. The Porsche class was won by a 1965 356C Coupe owned by Time and Diane Goodrich, of Hanford, Calif.

The activities at Pebble Beach are definitely social in tone, since all proceeds go to either the United Way or the philanthropic Pebble Beach Foundation. To make the limited entry interesting each year, special classes are created to attract a variety of cars. This year's featured classes were J-1 and 2 for pre- and post-war Delahayes and Delages. The pre-war group was won by a 1937 Delage D8120 Letourer and Marchand Aero Coupe owned by Henry Uihlein II, of Lake Placid, New York. The post-war group was won by a 1953 Delahaye 235 Henri Chapron Cabriolet owned by Jacques Harquindeguy from Walnut Creek, Calif.

Other classes were for open American classics built from 1933 to 1941, this one won by a 1936 Auburn 852 Henri Labourdette Cabriolet. The same class for closed cars was won by a 1936 Packard 140B Club Sedan.

The Duesenberg class, one of the most popular, was captured by a 1935 Duesenberg J Rollston Convertible Roadster owned by P.A. Parviz, of London, England. A 1926 Renault 45 Manessius Cabriolet Limousine, owned by George Wingard from Eugene, Oregon took the trophy for 1925 to 1939 European Classics.

Class G, for European Sports and Racing cars built from 1925 to 1939

was won by a beautiful Alfa Romeo 6c 1500 Zagato Spider owned by Jack and Barbara Becronis of San Mateo, California.

P.A. Parviz repeated his earlier win by taking top honors for the 16-cylinder American Classics with his 1930 Cadillac 452 Roadster. R.L. Atwell, from Kerrville, Texas, won the pre-war Rolls-Royce group with a 1933 Rolls-Royce P11 Brewster Convertible Sedan.

And in the all-Ferrari category for post-war European cars through 1960, a deep maroon 1959 Ferrari Testa Rossa 59 Fantuzzi Roadster entered by Melanie Finn, from Singer Island, Fla., was judged best.

Perhaps the most elegant cars displayed at Pebble Beach are the pre-war Mercedes-Benz cars. During this time many M-B owners commissioned coach builders to construct special bodies around chassis and power plants built by Mercedes. And for some years Mercedes also had a coachworks shop to accept special commissions from anxious customers. This year's class winner and Best of Show car was a 1935 Mercedes-Benz 500K Sindelfingen Special Roadster owned by Thomas and Gerd Perkins of Belvedere, Calif.

Historic races at Monterey: Museum in motion

Nine years ago, Californian Steve Earle invited some of his historic car racing buddies to Laguna Seca Raceway for a weekend of sweatless competition. About 60 cars and around 600 people showed up for a one-day event. Everyone had a good time and Earle decided to continue what is now an annual automotive happening.

The word rapidly spread and this year, at the ninth annual Monterey Historic Races, the entry list numbered more than 300 vintage and historic race cars and a three-day crowd estimated at more than 35,000 hyped car crazies. And there was plenty to get crazy about.

A spectator can approach the Monterey Historic races in several ways. One is conventional, by swinging off the freeway and heading east on Route 60 until you get to the track gates. The others are slightly

more cerebral. One fan said, "Watching these events is like going to a car museum, only better because the cars are driven, so you can see them in motion and hear them. After all, they were designed to be raced, not just looked at, even though some are beautiful enough to be works of art."

That's one way of viewing Earle's automotive history party. Another might be to watch the races thinking about each car and the individuals who made them famous, many of whom died in the process, and be annoyed that lesser driving talents have bought their way into seats vacated by the kings of motorsport. Said another spectator, "I saw that Lola raced here when Donohue drove it, and it makes me sad to see it driven so slowly. When Donohue won with that car, more than 10 years ago, he'd smoke the rear tires coming out of Turn Nine. I still like the car, but it isn't the same."

He's right, it's not the same and it shouldn't be. Now the cars are the stars and their presence provides that special electricity found at all major sports events. Most of the drivers, those who aren't retired racing champions, merely pay the bills and play supporting roles to some of the greatest racing cars in the world. To get full measure as a spectator you need to watch each of the 16 races with a separate view.

The older cars, some built as early as 1909, are museum pieces, and without knowing something about them, they don't look or sound exciting when they circle the track. However, when you look at a 1929 Stutz AA Series M Waymann Tourer puffing slowly around Laguna's 1.9-mile and you know it's the only survivor of three originals, the car commands respect. And when you know that same Stutz was built in Indianapolis and raced at Le Mans, retiring from third place when its pressurized gas tank exploded, it then becomes even more impressive. There is no way to get closer to a past racing era than to stand next to the Stutz wondering what its driver felt as he coasted from contention in France more than 50 years ago.

Even though the cars are the real stars, there were some people at Monterey who also qualified. Dan Gurney dropped in to thrill the crowd by showing how he won Porsche's only Formula 1 victory as he cut a series of quick demonstration laps in the same car he drove in the French



Grand Prix in 1962. George Follmer arrived to fill a seat he once occupied in a Porsche 917-10 Can-Am car, now owned by Vasek Polak, the pioneer auto dealer-racer car collector from Hermosa Beach, California. Judgen Barth, Le Mans winner, and son of famed Porsche driver Edgar Barth, was in Monterey as part of the Porsche contingent. Phil Hill arrived to drive several cars, most notable the 1936, 16-cylinder Auto Union Grand Prix car owned by the Deutsches Museum in West Germany. Ex-Formula I driver Ben Pon, now a part-time Carmel Valley resident, was there along with Bob Bondurant, Pete Lovely and Briggs Cunningham, who was honored along with his cars at last year's event.

Each year at Monterey, Steve Earle selects an automobile company to spotlight. It's a wonderful idea and provides spectators with a tight focus on a specific marque to stand out among hundreds of entries. Last year Cunningham was the featured marque and Briggs S. Cunningham the featured man. He responded by bringing every racing Cunningham and every living person connected with them to Monterey.

This year Porsche drew center court and took every advantage of the opportunity to show their best in front of a crowd that exceeded that of the Bing Crosby Golf Classic.

A record 1982 field produced an extra day of racing at Laguna Seca. Sunday opened not to the sound of pipe organ music, but to a roar that can come only from pipes bolted to big-block Chevys. Fred Knoop, driving his McLaren M-20, the same car World Champion Denny Hulme flipped on its back at the Road Atlanta Can-Am, ended a winner after holding off a charging George Follmer in one of Vasek Polak's 917-10 Porsches.

Both the engine noise and Follmer and Knoop's driving silenced detractors who said the Monterey Historic races weren't races, merely a series of displays. Follmer may no longer be regularly on the active driver list, but in the Porsche 917-10 he knows what to do. He would have won had it not been for Knoop, also no stranger to high-horsepower machinery. It was a race to the finish and Knoop turned an average speed for the 22.8-mile event of 100.80 MPH, with a fast lap of more than 103 MPH.

Sunday's competition ended on an

equally high note when Dimitri Skouras beat a field of 1958-1963 sports racing cars in his 1960 Coventry Climax-powered Lotus 19. Skouras jumped into an early two-lap lead, then dropped to third behind a '62 Ferrari-powered Cooper Monaco and the ex-Dan Gurney Lotus 18B powered by Ford. This was the car in which Gurney won Daytona by crossing the finish line on the starter motor after building a lead of several laps.

The Gurney luck didn't help the Lotus' current owner Wayne Lyndon, as he slowed with mechanical problems. Shortly before he did, the Ferrari-Cooper Conoco spun, and Skouras ended up where he started, again in first place.

Next year is the tenth historic race. Mark the date on your calendar, plan for it, make room reservations a year in advance and don't miss America's greatest celebration of auto racing. Watch it any way you feel most comfortable, and no matter what your frame of mind, you'll return. It's that good.

Faithful gather for salute to Porsche

The organizers at Monterey called it a salute to Porsche, and while Porsche didn't publicly proclaim its participation in California's natural Disneyland, it turned out to be a Porsche's salute to America.

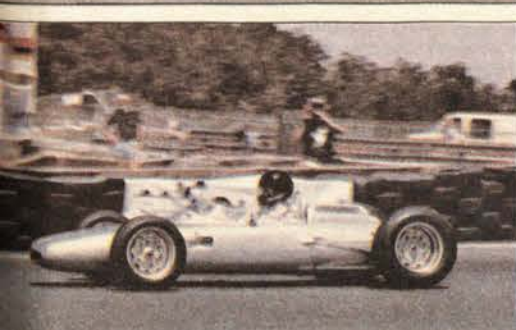
The Porsche people took every opportunity to make their presence felt, and through the efforts of the factory and the Porsche Club of America the Laguna Seca races looked more like an annual Porsche Parade than a multi-marque racing event for old cars.

First there were the cars, some old, some new, some for sale, some never for sale, and one so rare it almost wasn't driven. The highlights of Porsche's rolling stock were a 1936 Auto Union, the only one of its type in the free world, and the 1982 Le Mans winner, Porsche's future-think piece, the ground-effects 956 coupe. In between were some heavy-hitter automobiles like the 1938 60-K10, a VW-based special built by Porsche for the Berlin-to-Rome race, never held because of World War II. Its 1100cc VW engine, then tuned for 40 HP, pushed the still-sleek little coupe

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From far left: Ferrari Testa Rossas, 250LM; Porsches hit the track; Phil Hill in the 1936 Auto Union, Dan Gurney in the 1962 Porsche F1 car; Hispano-Suiza radiator mascot.

Dave Taylor photos



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drives better.)

Another magic weekend

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to near 100 MPH. Dr. Porsche regularly drove the 60-K10 to and from his home and office.

Other cars overshadowed by the Auto Union and the 956 were the ex-Dan Gurney Formula 1 car which won the French Grand Prix in 1962, the Type 936 that won Le Mans in 1976, '77 and 1981. In addition were more 550 Spyders, RSKs, RS 60s and 61s than ever previously assembled in one place, and just about every special-purpose Porsche one could imagine. The only one not there was the 1200 HP 917-30, the Can-Am champion in 1973. In light of the other machinery it was hardly missed.

The Auto Union, a rare Type C, called modestly by Audi "a milestone in the history of the motor car," has been faithfully restored to everlasting detail under the supervision of two experts, Ludwig Sebastian, formerly Bernd Rosemeyer's personal mechanic, and Professor Robert Eberan von Eberhorst, chief designer of the Auto Union grand prix car. The

basic design was done by Dr. Ferdinand Porsche and it is the first-ever mid-engined racing car. The 45-year-old Auto Union is now owned by the Deutsches Museum in Munich, West Germany. When it was active in competition it was raced regularly by drivers like Bernd Rosemeyer and Hans Stuck. At Monterey it was to be driven by ex-World Driving Champion Phil Hill. Or so everyone thought.

The man who disagreed was from the Deutsches museum and it took non-stop almost around the clock negotiations to get him to agree to a one-lap trip around Laguna Seca with Hill at the wheel.

It was high-drama, comic to most who were not directly involved, and finally skillful negotiations on the part of Audi's press department, Phil Hill and *Road and Track* magazine made the great moment arrive.

The keeper of the Auto Union first instructed Hill not to exceed 2,000 RPMs. Since the car makes 520 HP at 5,000 RPMs, the look on Hill's face didn't mask his feelings about being relegated to a speed slower than America's speed limit in one of history's fastest cars. The Deutsches man wasn't impressed that Phil Hill has won some of the world's great races in Ferraris of similar horsepower. Finally the rev limit was raised and the Auto Union roared onto the track, all 16 cylinders spitting some of the best sounds this side of Carmen McRae. The car's keeper watched nervously from a Porsche convertible, setting Hill's pace and providing a moving platform for a gaggle of R&T photographers. After one lap Hill obediently stopped at the start/finish line and became flabbergasted when the Deutsches man waved him forward for another lap. It was like winning a date with Raquel Welch and having her invite you in for coffee afterwards.

All of the Auto Union drama happened during the week, before

the crowds descended. Even so, they weren't disappointed as the museum man cut a series of demonstration laps on both racing days and didn't limit himself to 2,000 RPMs. No matter who drove, watching one of the world's great racing cars thrilled every person who has even the smallest understanding of automobiles.

In the people department Porsche was no less impressive. Dr. Porsche, grandson of the company's founder, led the group that included Chairman of the Board Peter W. Schutz, Manager of Export Sales Ed Peter, Press Relations officer Manfred Janke and practically every ranking official of the American distribution company including American Porsche+Audi boss Peter Fisher.

Schutz was the most active and most visible member of the group, with the possible exception of Jurgen Barth, Porsche's resident race driver. Both were everywhere, speaking to the faithful, being seen at the track, attending multiple dinners, cocktail parties and business

meetings. With all this going on, Barth still found time to strap on his helmet and drive various Porsches at racing speeds with Schutz usually standing on the pit wall smiling. To hear Schutz and see him under a bright California sun clad in a bright California sun racing jacket makes you wish you owned some

Porsche stock, if not one of their cars.

Porsche also took the opportunity to tease the public a little by releasing six of their new 911 SC cabriolets to be put on display in Laguna Seca's paddock area. (Watch *AutoWeek* just after Christmas for another full report.)

If all of this weren't enough, the Porsche company threw a little party for 800 or so of their intimate friends, who also happened to be the total race entry list plus guests, on Saturday night. On display were the Le Mans trophy, all the Porsche and Volkswagen of America brass and a fascinating new movie on the development of Porsche's car of tomorrow, the six-cylinder, four-valve, DOHC, liquid-cooled cylinder head, dual-turbocharged Type 956. According to Peter Schutz, this car's advanced chassis technology and probing aerodynamics represents what Porsche-philosophers will drive in the future.

Rumor had it at Monterey that Porsche dropped more than \$250,000 for the Laguna Seca bash. For those who paid attention it appears a low estimate, by maybe \$75,000 or so. Could that amount spent on relatively few people ever be worth it? Only Porsche AG and VoA will know for sure. It would appear however, that what Porsche AG and VoA were really saying was, "We recognize the American market as important, and we're committed to it." And it appears that the Porsche segment of the American market is equally committed to its car company.



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