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14th Annual Amelia Island Concours d'Elegance

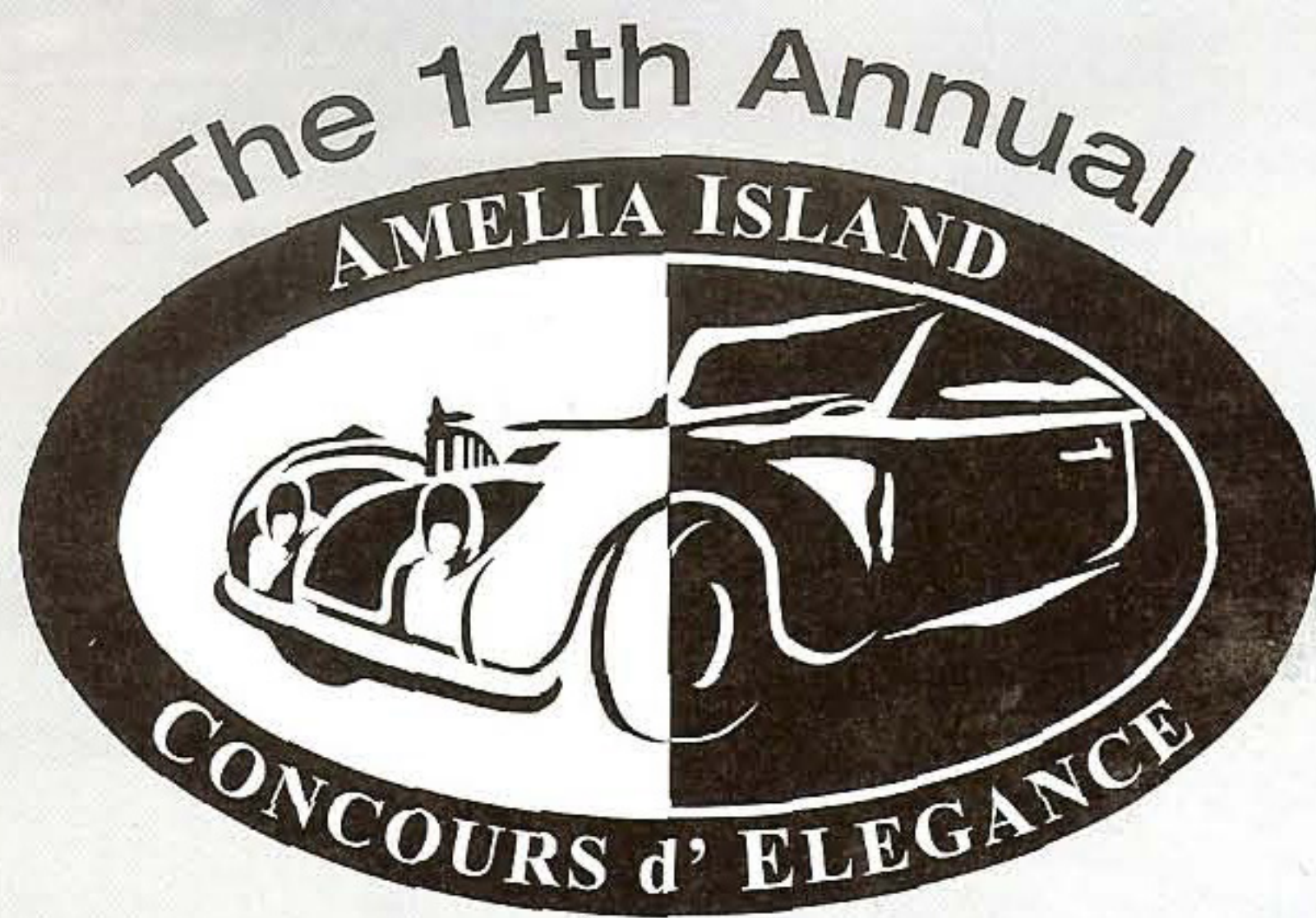


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By **Jeffrey Broadus**
Photos by Rashba.com

A Celebration of Vintage, Racing, Muscle and Classic Cars





This has been a year where Concours, like publishing companies, have been put to the test as to their ability to sustain market share. With advertising dollars fading and sponsors counting every penny the decision comes down to whether automakers are willing to continue their support of Concours around the country, many, like Amelia, having grown into world class events on par with Pebble Beach and Meadow Brook. Led by Bill Warner, Amelia's founder and Chairmen, the 14th annual Concours d'Elegance at the Amelia Island Ritz Carlton delivered another stellar event that will be talked about by car collectors for many months to come.

One of this event's most outstanding features has been a literal who's who of legendary race drives as Honorary Chairmen, since its inception in 1995. Legends like, Bobby Unser, Johnny Rutherford, Parnelli Jones, Carroll Shelby, Phil Hill, Sir Stirling Moss, Brian Redman, Dan Gurney, and this year's Honorary Chair David Hobbs, have brought living history to throngs of spectators and enthusiasts who come to Amelia. Hobbs, whose long championship career in Formula One, Indy Cars, Can Am, LeMans, Trans-Am, IMSA, IROC and NASCAR is nothing short of heroic, added one of the broadest motorsports careers in history to the lineage of Warner's illustrious Honorary Chairmen.

This year's show field was lined with over 250 exceptional motorcars and played host to more than 20,000 spectators. What is it that makes Amelia so popular, that sets this Concours apart from the others and secured its position as one of the Best Concours in the country? Well it's not a matter of being the most popular, or most recognized, although the Concours could easily fit either of those classifications, I believe the Amelia Island Concours delivers, from a hobbyist's perspective, a genuine and heartfelt sense of passion for automobiles at a level everyone can respect, from the single car collector to those with mega collections worth millions of dollars. It is an everyman's Concours that reaches every enthusiast at every level.

So what is a real Concours d'Elegance? When Leopold II, the King of Belgium, established the basic requirement for a proper motorcar at the beginning of the 20th century – that it have four comfortable armchairs – coachbuilders began to design various body designs to accommodate his majesty's decret loi. Soon, everyone wanted this new "Roi des Belges" style of motorcar. Then other functional demands were made, such as protecting passengers from the elements, and developing sporty as well as elegant body styles. The automobile was no longer just utilitarian transportation. The growing popularity of the motorcar soon suggested a competition for the best looking examples, a contest of beauty, a Concours d'Elegance where the very best designs vied for the Best of Show award and the honors that followed.

In theory, this is the procedure most events follow today, quite simply, a contest for the best-of-the-best that can be found; only now we have almost a century of automotive couture on the show field. The choices made by judges are literally for the best cars in history.

To make such a decision these cars are judged by some of the most noted car designers, race drivers, automotive journalists, publishers, historians and automotive museum curators in the world, many of whom are the most knowledgeable and well respected names in the business. At the conclusion of the event is a parade of Concours winners recognized for Best In Class, Most Elegant Coachwork, Most Outstanding Finish, The Chairman's Choice award, the coveted People's Choice Award chosen by the thousands of automotive aficionados in attendance, and of course, the Best of Show. That's the technical explanation, but what transpires in a day at Amelia is far more than clip boards and ballots, it is a rolling exhibition of automotive history that spans nearly a century of development, styling, and motorsports competition. That is what makes Amelia an event that stands head and shoulders above so many others.

This year, in addition to its ongoing racecar themes, the Amelia Island Concours paid tribute to the famous coachwork of Bohman & Schwartz, and "The races at Sebring and Daytona".

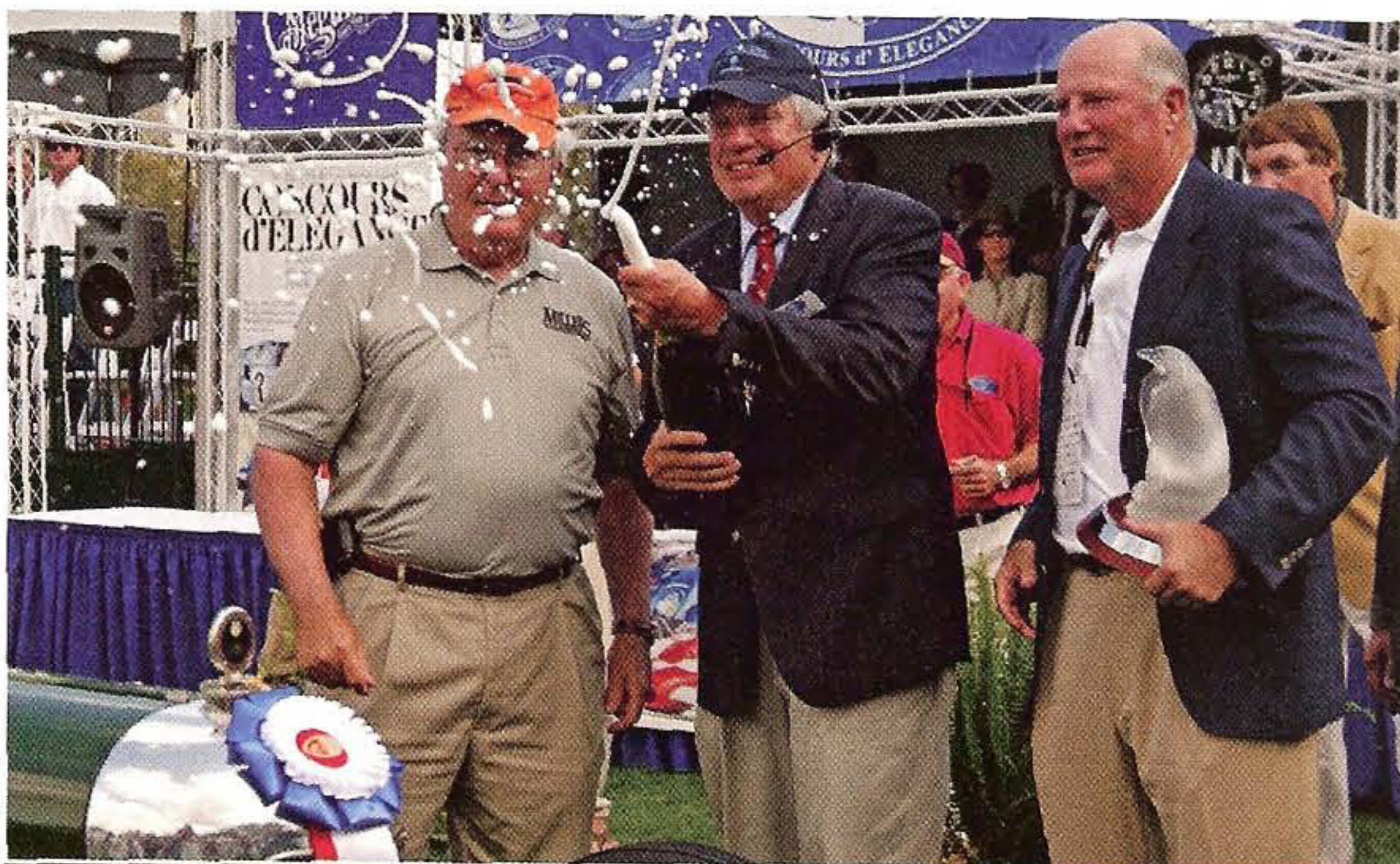
As stylists and coachbuilders to stars of stage and screen, and some of the wealthiest industrialists in America, the 1930s and 1940s belonged to Christian Bohman and Maurice Schwartz, who's partnership created some of the most famous, as well as outrageous, coachwork of the Classic Era. Their custom body styles were seen on Duesenbergs, Packards, and Cadillacs among other great marques, for clients like Clark Gable, Barbara Hutton, Bill "Bojangles" Robinson, and Ethel Mars of Mars Candy. Possibility their most famous and outrageous creation, and one of the stars of this year's Amelia Concours, was the "Phantom Corsair," penned by Rust Heinz, heir to the H. J. Heinz food empire. The Corsair's futuristic, shark-like body was mounted on a Cord 810 Chassis. The futuristic front wheel drive coupe even appeared in the 1938



Best in Show, Concours d'Elegance: 1931 Voisin C20 Demi-Berline. The Munder collection West Palm Beach, Fla.

Best in Show, Concours de Sport: #2 1923 Miller Special 122 Supercharged A. Dano Davis Jacksonville, Florida

Dan Davis, Bill Warner, and Lee Munder enjoy the Best in Show Celebration with some Moët.

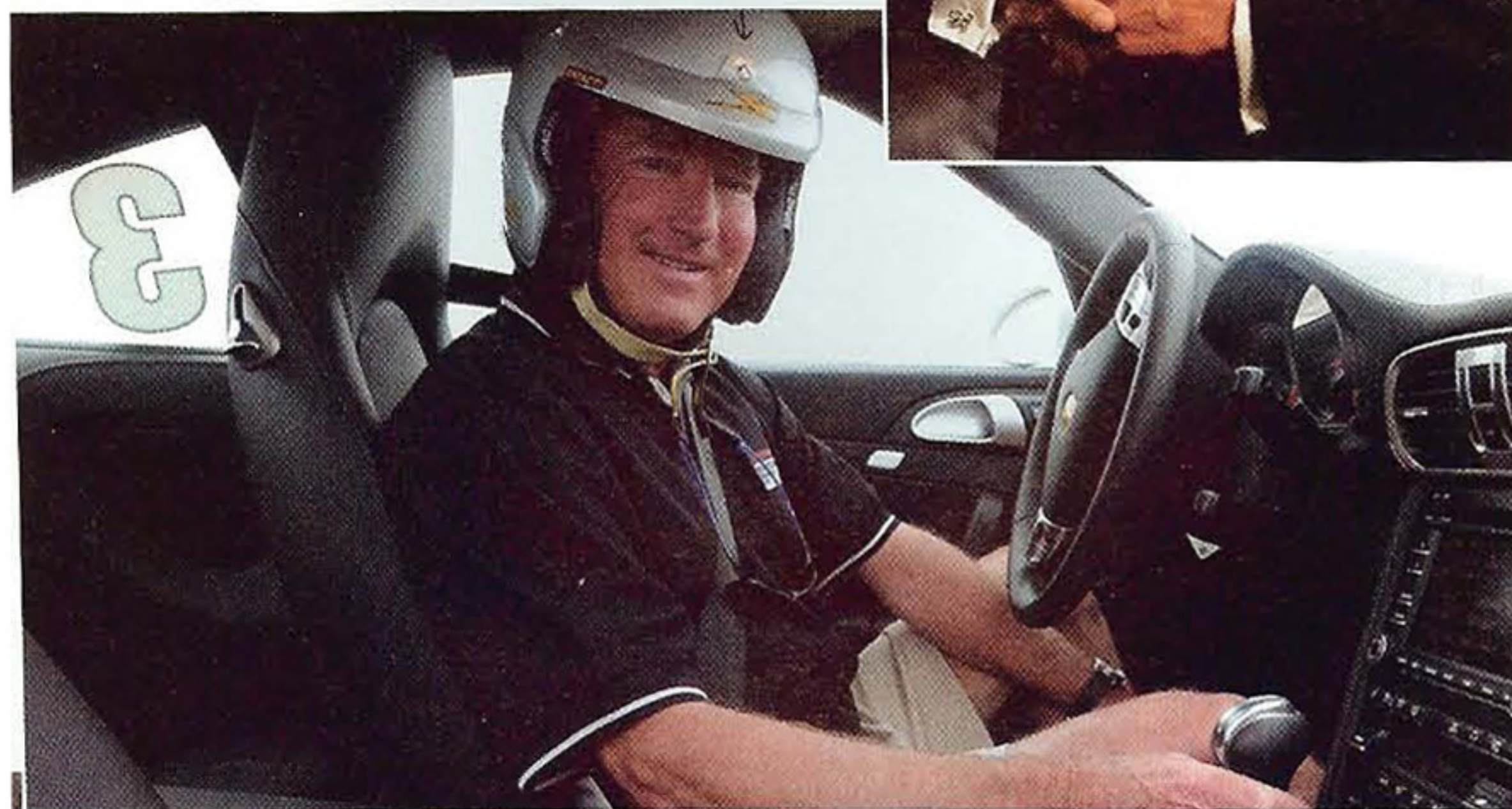




The fabulous Phantom Corsair from the National Automobile Museum, The Harrah Collection, Reno, NV.

Legendary race driver David Hobbs was this year's Honorary Chairman.

America's winningest endurance driver, Hurley Haywood gave high speed rides in the Porsche Turbo as part of the Porsche driving experience.



An enviable lineup of Rolls-Royce Silver Ghosts.

David O. Selznick comedy *Young In The Heart*, as the mysterious "Flying Wombat." The car made a rare appearance at Amelia thanks to the National Automotive Museum (The Harrah Collection) in Reno, NV. Concours founder Bill Warner described the Phantom Corsair as a, "Once-in-a-lifetime design." As part of the display honoring Bohman & Schwartz, Warner refers to the Corsair as "outrageous and futuristic at the same time." It is a 70-year old design and still generates a buzz wherever it goes and still defies description today; just as it did when it rolled out of their Pasadena shop in 1938 at an estimated cost of \$25,000. With the first car built, essentially prototyped, Rust Heinz had plans to build a limited number for about \$12,500 per car, but his untimely death shortly after completion ended any production plans. The vehicle was later sold to comedian Herb Shriner and was displayed for a time at the Silver Springs (Florida) Museum before ending up in the hands of famed collector William Harrah, who restored the Phantom Corsair to its original condition in the early 1960s.

The second tribute was to the 1959 Sebring F1 and Daytona Indy Car races, which had different reasons for being short-lived. In Sebring's case, the Formula One race was a financial bomb for Alec Ulmann, the man behind the legendary central Florida racetrack. Although it was an exciting contest with just a few points separating the top three drivers for a shot at the F1 crown that year, Ulmann barely broke even, as the crowd was half of what the 12 Hours of Sebring attracted earlier in the year. New Zealander Bruce McLaren won the race in his Cooper-Climax and at 22 years, 104 days, became the youngest driver to win a Formula One race. It was the F1's only appearance at Sebring.

Daytona's experience was far more Tragic. When the big Offenhauser-powered Indy cars descended on the banks of Daytona, one of the drivers, George Amick, immediately set a one-lap American course record of 176.887mph during practice. Unfortunately for Amick, he lost control of his car on the last lap of the



Cars line-up Friday morning for the FedEx Road Tour.

100-mile race, drifted into the guardrail and somersaulted down into the infield; he was pronounced dead at the track hospital. Miami native Jim Rathmann took the checkered flag for that race and in the process set a world competitive race record of 171.261mph. A second scheduled race was cut to 50 miles due to Amick's accident and Rathmann again came out on top. Indy cars have not raced at Daytona since.

This year at Amelia, 1969 Indy 500 winner Jim Rathmann, along with Johnny Rutherford, Bobby Unser, and Parnelli Jones, participated in a round table discussion called the "Great Roadsters Drivers" which gave Indy fans quite a treat as they listened to the four legendary racecar drivers argue and joke about who "was the fastest and the toughest" driver. Bob Varsha of Speed TV and automotive journalist Tim Considine were the moderators and sometime peace keepers of the debate.

Other great presentations included "The Great Customizers" presented by BASF. This seminar brought together five of the most well known designers and builders of Customs and TV/movie cars. Customizing car, as many of us know, is an American tradition that began in Southern California and flourished after WWII. The designers were George Barris (King of the Kustomizers), Chip Foose (Overhaulin TV show), Beau Boeckmann (Pimp My Ride), retired GM designer Wayne Cherry, the legendary Dean Jeffries, and automotive designer and founder of Advanced Automotive Technologies, Steve Pastener. They brought examples of their cars to the Ritz Carlton ballroom and described the life and times they lived creating one-off cars as far back as the 1940s, and bringing it up to today's TV reality shows. Writer, TV celebrity, and my friend Ken Gross acted as the event moderator. And if this was not enough for Concours attendees, there was the "Porsche Experience" an immersion for Porschephiles into the marque's sports racing history.

Saturday also brought another Amelia tradition, the annual RM auction, which had a few changes this year. In



Jim Patterson's striking Delage D8 Aerodynamic Coupe.



Three of the great customizers, Chip Foose, George Barris, and Beau Boeckman, were part of the Friday seminar with Dean Jeffries, Wayne Cherry, and Steve Pastener.



Tom Stegman's Ferrari 275 GTB/4 won the class Giallo Fly (Fly Yellow), a class for only yellow Italian cars!



Judge Paul Ianaurio goes over a rare 1914 Rauch and Lang Electric of George and Manny Dragone.



Jack Rich's impressive 1906 National Model E won The Compass Bank Award for Best Open Car.

the words of our auction editor Rick Carey, "Construction at the Ritz moved RM's auction to a bigger tent on the lawn overlooking the Atlantic where the cars had previously been previewed. It also made it impractical to parade the cars across the block. RM turned the difficulty into an opportunity, along the lines of "making Lemonade" by setting up frequent test drives, facilitating a faster tempo freed from the logistics of moving cars and preserving the car's accessibility throughout the auction for last minute quick assessments. It worked well and continued this sale's reputation as one of the year's best".

On Sunday, the day of the Concours, Amelia looked more like Pebble Beach with low lying fog and limited visibility in the morning hours, but when the fog lifted the rest of the day was blessed with moderate spring like temperatures and sunny skies. There were approximately 90 different marques represented including the rare and vintage racecars. Those who attended had an opportunity to see some of the most amazing automobiles ever produced.

As you walk the Concours field and examine each car on display, they all have a story to tell, a story taking you back to one day in history where, somewhere in the world, another classic design was penned by a designer unbeknownst of the legacy he would leave behind. As an attendee you have the opportunity to see some of the most exciting automobiles ever built, many bearing contemporary names still in business like Roll-Royce, Bentley, Mercedes-Benz, Jaguar, Ferrari, BMW and Cadillac, but commingled with long gone historic marques such as Bugatti, Delahaye, Duesenberg, Miller, Packard and Stutz. It is a reminder that what is taking place in the automotive world today, has happened before.

In the end, and in true Amelia tradition, the event has dual Best of Show awards, one for the Concours d'Elegance and another for sports/competition cars, the Concours de Sport. This year Concours de Sport went to a Miller Special 122 supercharged racecar owner by Dano Davis, and Concours d'Elegance Best of Show was presented to the visually stunning 1931 Voisin C20 Demi Berline, owned by the Munder Collection.

As a Concours d'Elegance, Amelia remains a world class event with several days of scheduled activities, seminars, the high-pitched action of the RM Auction, and the leisurely atmosphere of Fernandina Beach and its quaint shops, marina, private airstrip, and fantastic restaurants. More than enough to keep the entire family entertained, so mark your calendar for the 15th Annual Amelia Island Concours d'Elegance to be held March 11-14, 2010. We'll see you there.

