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The Oakland Press/VAUGHN GURGANIAN Model Haeley Buchinger, of Northville, stands next to a 1953 Cadillac Eldorado on display during media day for the 30th Anniversary Meadow Brook Concours d'Elegance on the campus of Oakland University in Rochester Hills.

ROCHESTER HILLS – Classic car collectors and fans will enter car lovers' paradise at the Meadow Brook Concours d'Elegance this weekend.

The Meadow Brook Concours d'Elegance is celebrating its 30th anniversary Friday to Sunday on the grounds of Meadow Brook Hall in Rochester Hills.

The classic car show will feature more than 200 automobiles from every era.

Matthew de Larcinese, executive director of the Concours d'Elegance, said the show has "presented the rarest and most unique cars" to thousands of viewers throughout the last 30 years.

"The Concours has been Detroit's preeminent event since its conception in 1979 and is to this day the testament to the hard work and sweat that went into building this great city," de Larcinese said.

Although the selection of cars has varied throughout the years, de Larcinese said one factor has remained consistent — the presence of the Detroit Big Three automakers.

Yet that, too, will change this year.

“2009 marks the first year that the Concours continues without complete participation of them,” de Larcinese said, “but it is under this current understanding that this year we give back to the Big 3 automakers by displaying an amazing field of cars that we simply dub ‘The Best of Detroit.’ ”

Larry Moss, Concours d’Elegance director, said the show will feature a diverse collection of cars from all decades.

“We’ve got some of the greatest classics this show has ever seen,” Moss said.

Cars on display include 16 Packard V-12s, 12 Rolls Royce Phantoms from the 1930s through 1950s and a plethora of Ferrari, Jaguar and Maserati sports cars.

The show also will exhibit cars from the early years of drag racing such as Ray Mancini’s 1968 Plymouth and Virgil Cates’ 1937 Willys race cars.

Moss said drag racing in the early 1960s motivated automotive companies to experiment with high performance engines and sell cars.

“In the early years of drag racing, the factories were really involved with racing — recognizing racing sold cars,” Moss said.

He added new cars will be on display and available for purchase, including the new 2010 Ferrari California and 2009 Corvette ZR1.

RM Auctions Inc. will provide 102 cars for the auction occurring 11 a.m. on Aug. 1. Participants can preview the vehicles 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on July 31.

Cars to be auctioned include a 1933 Chrysler CL Imperial Sport Phaeton and Jaguar XK140 MC Roadster once owned by “Jeopardy!” host Alex Trebek.

The Ford Motor Company donated the sixth Ford GT ever built to the auction.

A portion of the proceeds from the sale, as well as auction fees, will go to the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation.

Detroit resident Larry Seyfarth looks forward to showcasing his 1959 Ford Thunderbird at the event.

Seyfarth bought the car as a present for his wife, Nancy, for their first wedding anniversary in 1959.

However, it's now Seyfarth's car, as Nancy had her eye on a different automobile.

"She decided she wanted a yellow '47 Cadillac convertible, so I made her a trade," Seyfarth said.

Twenty years later, Seyfarth began showing the Thunderbird at car shows across the country. Seyfarth's Thunderbird won "best of show" at Ford Motor Company's 75th and 100th anniversary celebrations.

While cars are the main focus of the event, Margery Krevsky — author of "Sirens of Chrome: The Enduring Allure of the Auto Show Model" — says spectators cannot forget the significance of the human models who have stood beside cars at auto shows throughout the decades.

"I call these models and product car specialists 'sirens of chrome,'" Krevsky said. "They help create the mystique and cement in our physique the very unique relationship we have with cars."

Krevsky said the models' outfits are as important as the creative decisions made about each vehicle.

At the event, models will be decked in clothes from the same era as the vehicles they stand by.

For instance, a woman in a 1940's pink crepe dress will model next to a 1940 Chrysler Newport Dual Cowl Phaeton, and a model wearing a 1960's flower power jumpsuit will be near a 1966 427 Cobra.

Several of the outfits were worn at past auto shows.

There is a parallel between car and fashion designs, Krevsky said, noting that "chrome, Benz and Dagmar bumpers (were popular) in the same time that hats, gloves, matching handbags, top stitching and dressmaker touches were part of couture."

Whether attendees are interested in the fashion or cars, Moss assured the 30th Concours d'Elegance will have "something for everybody."

FYI

The 2009 Meadow Brook Concours d'Elegance will be from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Aug. 2 at Meadow Brook Hall in Rochester. Tickets cost \$25 for adults. Children 12 and younger are admitted free.

Buy tickets online at www.meadowbrookconcours.org. The RM Auction will be from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Aug. 1 at Oakland University's Shotwell-Gustafson Pavilion.

Comments