

## Traditions of a Concours d'Elegance – Part One –

### Ferraris in the Forest at Pebble Beach August 16, 2015

What makes a Concours d'Elegance (pronounced “kawn-koor dey-ley-gahns”) so much fun? There is the Concours competition itself, which is always the “pièce de resistance” but there are many other events surrounding a Concours such as the parties and parades held by locals to coincide with the main event. This later aspect has been refined to such a level by corporate sponsors at the Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance that almost every major sponsor either has hospitality tents/s in which to entertain existing and potential clients and at the same time reveal their wares. Another tradition of several major Concours is to have a superior automobile auction or two. At Pebble Beach, there are not one or two auctions but at least five auctions by such famed names as [RM/Sothebys], Gooding and Bonham.

Let's not forget the charity aspect of the Concours. Pebble Beach has been able to raise over \$20 million for charity over the last 20 years. In addition, the week around the Concours is said to generate more business for Monterey County than at any other time of the year.

Several different types of motoring events such as hillclimbs or local races not to mention local auto club events and shows are also timed to coincide with the week leading up to and sometimes after the most prestigious Concours. The Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance is unquestionably the granddaddy of them all in North America. A tradition starting in the late 1700s in Paris, the first Concours began when the local gentry paraded their best carriages and their finery in the local streets and parks to be evaluated by their friends and acquaintances.

This year, on the Friday before the 2015 Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance, a tradition was recreated, loosely known as “Ferraris in the Forest”. Six vintage Ferraris and their erstwhile owners polished and



tuned up their babies to re-enact a race through the forest that was first run 65 years ago at the inaugural Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance. Present at the re-enactment and starting the “race” were the immediate relatives of the late great legendary west coast race car driver, Phil Hill. Phil no doubt enjoyed the thrill of this dangerous competition which lasted from 1950 to 1956. One wrong move, one lapse of attention, one miscalculation and the car could

come face to face with a very substantive, 200 year old pine. The stakes were definitely high.

This year the crowd on hand conveyed the excitement as engines revved and Mrs. Alma Hill and her son Derek alternately voiced the familiar words, "*Gentlemen, start your engines*". To hear the growls and whines of these finely tuned engines or beasts electrified the group, as their minds drifted back to those early days of Pebble lore. Several of the Ferraris in the re-enactment were former race cars that had actually raced those early competitions on the Pebble Beach forest course, including such exotic specimens as a 1949 Ferrari 166MM Touring Barchetta (1951 Pebble Beach road race), a 1952 Ferrari 340 Mexico Vignale Spyder (1952 PB road race) and a 1955 Ferrari 857S Scaglietti Spyder that came third in the prized Del Monte Trophy in that final 1956 race. Drivers expressed fright and delight through grins and serious looks of terror, reminding the spectators of the fun and constant element of danger inherent in any road race. Fortunately all the Ferraris emerged from the forest unscathed and owners, drivers and spectators were delighted with the outcome.

This is just one example of the fun and excitement that surround the events and traditions of a Concours with the Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance at the pinnacle of these traditions.

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