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## Inside the Hamptons' Most Exclusive Lawn Party, Where the Cars Are as Elite as the Guests

The Bridge, a collectible-car show and lawn party at the Bridgehampton golf club, boasts 150 stunning cars, 1,200 elite guests, and 17 brands eager to spend time with them.

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→ by BRETT BERK

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**T**he lawn party that occurred in Bridgehampton on Saturday was unlike any of the other tony events that dominate the Hamptons summer calendar, and it wasn't just the presence of 150 stunning contemporary and vintage vehicles. Held at the Bridge, a members-only golf club, the car show is not a contest, where the cars are analyzed by experts for their historical accuracy. It's simply a big, lavish party, with bayside views, bounteous food and beverages, and gorgeous cars to admire.



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“One of the things that separates us from other events is that there is no judging here,” luxury-event consultant and Bridge co-founder **Shamin Abas** said as we looked out over the field from the modernist, Roger Ferris–designed clubhouse. “All of these cars are hand-picked, from private collections.”

And at the Bridge, the guests are as carefully curated as the cars. The golf club is rumored to have a seven-figure initiation fee, and the event founders—who, in addition to Abas, include New York City lawyer (and car collector) **Jeffrey Einhorn**, and Bridge owner (and car collector) **Robert Rubin**—would prefer to keep the attendee list equally exclusive. The Bridge is not open to the public; one cannot simply buy a ticket. Only 1,200 select guests can attend, and an invite has apparently become coveted among the local elite. “I’ve had people calling, asking for days, and all I can say is, ‘No, no, no,’” said Abas.





The club was built on the former site of the Bridgehampton Race Circuit, an important stop during the mid-century heyday of American road racing. The display thus privileges post–World War II vehicles that may have, did, or were eligible to run the track during that era, making for a show that was a combination of the interesting, the intriguing, and the exquisite, with vehicles ranging in value from five- to eight-figures.

A row of air-cooled Porsche 911s sat alongside a pair of custom-bodied 1954 Aston Martin DB2/4s, one created by famed Swiss coachbuilder Graber, another from famed Italian coachbuilder Bertone. A menacing, factory-correct Chevrolet Chevelle SS muscle car was parked near an outrageous 1965 Shelby GT350R, one of only 36 made, and the one raced by prominent American driver Mark Donohue. Oddball custom station-wagon conversions of a 1980s Mercedes S-Class and a 1970s Cadillac DeVille rested up the fairway from a pair of perfect space-age “hybrids”—cars with lithe European bodies, but muscular American motors—a domineering 1952 Chrysler Prototype styled by Ghia, and a lissome 1963 Corvette Concept by renowned Pininfarina stylist **Tom Tjaarda**. Swoon.





Photograph by Robin Trajano/Courtesy of The Bridge.

A competitive 1957 Maserati 300S, one of 26, sat upfield from a quad-bladed pinwheel of Ferrari Dinos and a tri-bladed pinwheel of Ferrari Daytonas. Sammy Davis Jr.'s black Rolls-Royce Camargue, gifted to him by Frank Sinatra, was parked at the crest of a hill (New York State vanity plate: MRSHOWBZ.) There was even a hand-built replica of a Dymaxion, an argent, ovoid, three-wheeled 1930s behemoth designed by visionary futurist Buckminster Fuller, creator of America's **geodesic-dome pavilion** at the 1967 Montreal World Expo, and commissioned by **Jeff Lane** of the Lane Motor Museum in Nashville. (Your author once had **the joy/terror of driving this vehicle.**)



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Other enjoyable distractions were scattered about the course, including tents serving mini-lobster rolls, mini-hamburgers, mini-dumplings, mini-beef skewers, and mini-avocado toast, as well as endless sloshings of local wines in the late-summer blush of white and rosé. At the 18th hole, there was also an art fair. Here, a dozen well-known gallerists including Marlborough Contemporary, **Vito Schnabel**,\_\_\_ 303, and David Zwirner, displayed work in a cluster of highbrow, custom shipping containers. Back at the clubhouse, a set was underway by the metronomic swamp-rock band Endless Boogie, an industry supergroup consisting mainly of employees of New York indie label Matador Records (signers of Car Seat Headrest, Perfume Genius, Iceage, Algiers, every band you worshipped in the 90s) who first performed as the opening act for **Stephen Malkmus's** solo project.





There were also displays from other luxury manufacturers, including flying-car brand Terrafugia, fractional-jet ownership group NetJets, private-helicopter company Bell, and exclusive automakers like Rolls-Royce and McLaren, the latter of which offered rides in their **spectacular 570S Spider** sports car from the East Hampton airport to the event. The clubhouse itself was branded by main sponsor, watchmaker Richard Mille, which, prior to our departure from New York, gave us a sneak preview of their all-new \$10 million 57th Street boutique in the base of the towering Rafael Viñoly spindle, **432 Park Avenue**. Mille also introduced a new tourbillon at the event, the RM 12-01, a limited edition watch that starts at just \$828,000.

With so many elite people in one space, the Bridge acts as an effective marketing event aimed at high-net-worth individuals, a **practice we've studied quite closely**. “People fly in for this event from California, from Nashville, from Europe, people who really care about cars,” said Abas. “And the brands here have access to people they ordinarily wouldn't.”



Core sponsors of the Bridge have grown from two, in the first year, to 17 this year. Given this success, the founders have plans to continue to “respectfully” increase its scale. “Though *this* event will remain by invite only,” Abas said, gesturing out at the course, “we will definitely be growing ancillary events for future years.” Already, this year, a Cars & Coffee gathering was added on Sunday morning, transporting some of the concours vehicles to the Bridgehampton Historical Society, where the public could ogle them for free. An automotive auction may be included moving forward (Bonhams auction house is already a sponsor), as well as a road rally for participating cars.

“We want to make this a full-weekend destination,” says Abas. “This is the best time of year in the Hamptons. The rentals are done. The traffic is done. This was a very intentional choice.”

