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## Art, Design, and the Future Collide at Collector Car Shows Coast to Coast

By Tamara Warren  
October 7, 2022



SHAMIN ABAS  
COMMUNICATIONS FOR ULTRA-LUXURY BRANDS

The car industry is in the midst of a transformation to electric vehicles, as late 20th-century models are becoming valuable collectibles. It's one explanation for why the collector car scene continues to boom as auction prices climb and a new generation of car enthusiasts emerges.

From coast to coast over the summer, well into the fall season, car enthusiasts paid top dollar and clamored for access to exclusive events to see immaculate Ferraris, Porsches, and Mercedes-Benz vehicles up close. In tandem, these collector car gatherings have become defacto modern auto shows, where car companies show off their new electrified models to their best customers, media, and the competition's executives. While auto shows shrink or disappear altogether, collector car shows have become the venue to unveil the latest electric and as a swan song for gas-powered performance cars, a setting where automotive aesthetics have value and implications for the future.





Photo by Tony Laiacona.



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In late summer, Monterey Car Week featured a full slate of programming by automakers who brought their most exclusive cars to the Monterey Peninsula. On a brisk evening in August, Land Rover's President **Joe Eberhardt** unveiled the Range Rover SV Carmel Edition made in a limited run of 17 models, a nod to the 17 Mile Drive road that lines the peninsula. Held at a cliffside home designed by **Richard Martin** overlooking the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, complete with offerings of massages and sound baths, it was one of a dozen events hosted by carmakers that day alone for customers to vibe with the brand.

While the quaint streets of Pacific Grove and Carmel-by-the-Sea are jammed with collector cars, new futuristic cars were the highlight of the **Quail**, a ticketed event held at the Peninsula Hotel, that featured a festive backdrop of food tents, a marching band, and a broad array of exotic performance cars. Here McLaren debuted the Solus GT, Bugatti revealed its 1,600 hp Bugatti W16 Mistral, and Maserati unveiled the Mc20 Cielo Spyder. “We don’t have an audience that’s a certain age. It’s more of a mindset,” Maserati global CEO, **Davide Grasso** said on site. “The road to electrification is important. A more youthful mind is more open.”





Photo by Kevin Arechiga, courtesy of Mercedes-Benz.





Lukas and Kevin Czinger, photo by Tony Laicono, courtesy of Czinger.

Car executives were on hand at the Quail to talk about their products, conversations that once took place at traditional motor shows. “We purified the design,” said Bentley design chief **Andreas Mindt**, ahead of the unveiling of the \$2 million **Bentley** Mulliner Batur. “People like it for that. It’s less decorative and its more about the basic architecture. The result is matching the design to the brand.” The attributes of car design were on full display in the picturesque setting.



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Across town, car collectors pulled up to the private homes tucked in the gated Pebble Beach community to window shop for cars on display. At the Lamborghini house, painter **Troilo** had several works on view, as he made a live painting next to a customized Lamborghini Huracan project called Minotauro. The Monterey Car Week activations culminated in the marquis event, the Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance. Despite brisk temperatures, participants donned vintage costumes to accompany cars on the golf course, where thousands of spectators came to ogle at the immaculate restorations. These rare cars were—as always—polished, fussy, and in perfect period correct formation. Pebble Beach culminated in the winning entry, a 1932 **Duesenberg** J Figoni, crossing the stage as confetti flew through the air. Even for people who don't collect cars, it was a pop cultural moment to see the outpouring of affection for restored mechanical objects. Just outside of the course, was the concept lawn, where the new cars on display competed for a space in the future.





Photo by Tony Laiacona, courtesy of Czinger.

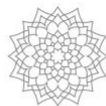


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Justine Simmons and Joseph Simmons, photo by Sean Zanni, courtesy of The Bridge.



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In September, **Jeffrey Einhorn, Robert Rubin, and Shamin Abas** hosted the **Bridge**, an event that is only in its sixth year, but is a hot invite-only ticket in the Hamptons. The main attraction was held at Rubin's **Bridge golf club**, named for the **Bridgehampton Race Circuit** on the same grounds, which saw delirious motorsport action from 1957 to 1974. The 1967 Ferrari Dino Shooting Brake Prototype and the 1968 **Monteverdi** High Speed Pietro Fura Prototype once owned by **Brigitte Bardot** and **Gunter Sachs** and procured by **Morton Street Partners** greeted guests at the entrance. A 1961 **Jaguar** E-Type, a 1967 **Bizzarrini** 5300 GT Strada and a 1960 Porsche 718 RS 60 Works were highlights parked on the golf course along the coastline. Modern carmakers **Czinger** and **Rimac** were among the automakers to show electrified performance cars at the Bridge. "More and more we are seeing the debut of very special and exotic vehicles at exhibitions such as The Bridge, where manufacturers are more likely to find a willing and qualified purchaser than an auto show. These exhibitions have replaced the salons of yesteryear," said Einhorn.



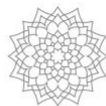
On the same weekend as the Bridge, the **Detroit Concours** was staged adjacent to the **Detroit Institute of Arts**. While a decade ago it seemed that the future of car collecting was in jeopardy, quite the opposite has occurred as car collecting goes digital and companies can be more thoughtful and targeted in the audiences they seek out. **Bonhams** auction house also has a presence at the Bridge and the **Audrain Newport Car Concours and Motor Week**, held the first weekend of October. “We’re at a pivotal moment in history as we move into electrification. That has brought in new enthusiasts who are interested by the innovation and design of today’s models,” said **Jakob Greisen**, who heads up Bonhams US Motoring Department. Bonhams is preparing to auction an electrified NIO customized by artist **Ornamental Conifer** in October. “Collaborations with artists, like the NIO EP9 with Ornamental Conifer, make these special edition cars even more rare and it’s likely that we’ll see this again on the auction block at a higher value in the future. Look at how important and celebrated the BMW art cars are today, for example, painted by the likes of **Warhol** and **Stella** nearly half a century ago.” If dollar signs are any indicator of the fever for car collecting, it’s worth noting that the online auction site **Bring a Trailer** cleared a billion dollars in sales this year alone. While the combustion engine may soon be a thing of the past, the desire to codify classic design is very much intact.







Photo by Tony Laiacona, courtesy of Richard Mille.



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