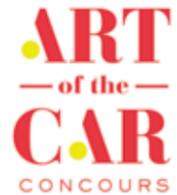




FINDING UNIQUE DREAM CARS

The Art of the Car Concours® Announces 2015 Features

BY MICHAEL LYNCH



The ninth edition of the Midwest's most important classic automobile exhibition will be held on the campus of the Kansas City Art Institute on June 28, 2015. More than 200 significant vehicles from the history of the automobile will be on display at the Art of the Car Concours® including vintage cars, trucks, hot rods, motorcycles and two and four-wheel racing machinery and pedal cars. These range from the early 1900s to the 1970s.

This year's feature will be concept/dream cars. Manufacturers produced one-off cars almost from the beginning of the automobile. They filled three corporate purposes. The design department could flex its creative muscles by designing what they thought the car of the future would look like. Dream cars drew crowds to auto shows and dealerships providing a halo effect on the production cars.

The golden age of the dream cars was the 1950s and 60s. During that period, major manufacturers designed show cars that included features that would appear on production models over several years. General Motors, under design chiefs Harley Earle and Bill Mitchell, had the most elaborate displays, but even smaller manufacturers created single example cars. Many families had a yearly tradition of touring the showrooms of all different makes to see the year-to-year changes that were much more noticeable than they are today, when government mandates regarding mileage and crash worthiness influence styling decisions.

The Art of the Car Concours will have several dream cars from that era. Perhaps the most symbolic of the expense the auto makers went to is the General Motors Futurliner that will be on the Art of the Car Concours show field. Twelve of these massive 10-yard-long buses, each taller than a one story building, were built for General Motors' Parade of Progress tours that visited cities all over the

country. They carried displays of then new technology. Jet engines, the conversion of railroad locomotives from steam to diesel power and traffic control in the growing cities were examples.

Of the original dozen Futurliners, 10 have been recovered and the Number 10 production model was recently inducted into the National Historic Vehicle Register, a venture of the Historic Vehicle Association, the Interior Department and the Library of Congress. This is the Futurliner that will be displayed at the Art of the Car Concours. General Motors Heritage, which maintains a museum of GM history, has agreed to send three cars that accompanied the Futurliner on its Parade of Progress tours. Event organizers expect similar vehicles from other manufacturers.

Although GM had the dominant brands in both volume and styling in the post-World War II era, smaller manufacturers also produced dream cars. Packard was a leading luxury car maker from the

More than 200 significant vehicles from the history of the automobile will be on display at the Art of the Car Concours® including vintage cars, trucks, hot rods, motorcycles and two and four-wheel racing machinery and pedal cars.

Below: This 1954 Packard Panther from the Ralph Marano Collection is one of five cars from the collection that will be part of the Art of the Car Concours display of concept cars.



CONTINUED >

(CONTINUED)



The General Motors Futurliner, dating from the late 1930s, will be on display at the 2015 Art of the Car Concours

firm's beginnings just after the turn of the 20th Century until World War II. To survive the Great Depression, they were forced to add lower price models to their line.

After the war, management errors diluted the brand as a luxury car. As the industry made great styling strides, Packard was left behind and their products, whatever the price, had too much of a family resemblance. The result was an abandonment of the luxury market. Continuing low volume led to a merger with Studebaker in 1953 but the slide continued and in 1959 the Packard nameplate was retired. Despite these upheavals, Packard continued to make concept cars, some in small series. New Jersey Packard collector, Ralph Marano is known for his selection of prewar Packards with bodies by Howard Darrin, an American who ran shops in both Paris and Pasadena.

Marano also has the world's outstanding collection of postwar Packard dream cars. He will bring five of them to the Art of the

Car Concours. One of the most spectacular is the 1954 Panther. This was a two-seater Packard stylist Richard Teague designed in response to the Nash-Healey, the Ford Thunderbird and the Corvette. It never reached production after four had been built. One ran more than 130 mph on the sand at Daytona Beach. Ralph Marano will visit the Art of the Car Concours in June.

Ancillary events abound at and around the concours, and one is especially interesting. Hagerty Insurance, the largest insurer of classic cars, sponsors a Youth Judging Program at the Art of the Car Concours. Designed primarily for youths ages 8-16, the Youth Judging Program is building the next generation of automotive conneiseurs. The Young Judges are guided through the show field as a group and are able to interface with collectors and restorers. This allows them to learn the history of the cars and gain insight as to why they are significant. The group then decides by voting which car will win their award.. For details, visit www.artofthecarconcours.com or call Melinda Cox at 816-561-4999.