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Amelia Island Concours

Time and Navigation at the Smithsonian

Christophe Claret Soprano

AMELIA ISLAND CONCOURS

TURNS 18

AND IS STILL SHOWING OFF

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It is always a thrill for me to make the drive along the grounds of the Ritz Carlton, entering the main driveway into the majestic and beautiful hotel that plays host to the Amelia Island Concours each year. The northern Florida landscape and the lush weeping trees full with early spring are so inviting and the cool air is invigorating to the soul. Arriving on a Friday, one would think that this “off day” would be just that. But, the nearby driving range which is used for the main parking area was almost full by mid-day. That says a lot right there. Walking into the hotel, it was already abuzz with tons of guests registering and mingling about discussing this weekend’s doings. Many classics were already parked or still waiting to be unloaded from their trailers, while their owners made themselves right at home for the weekend.

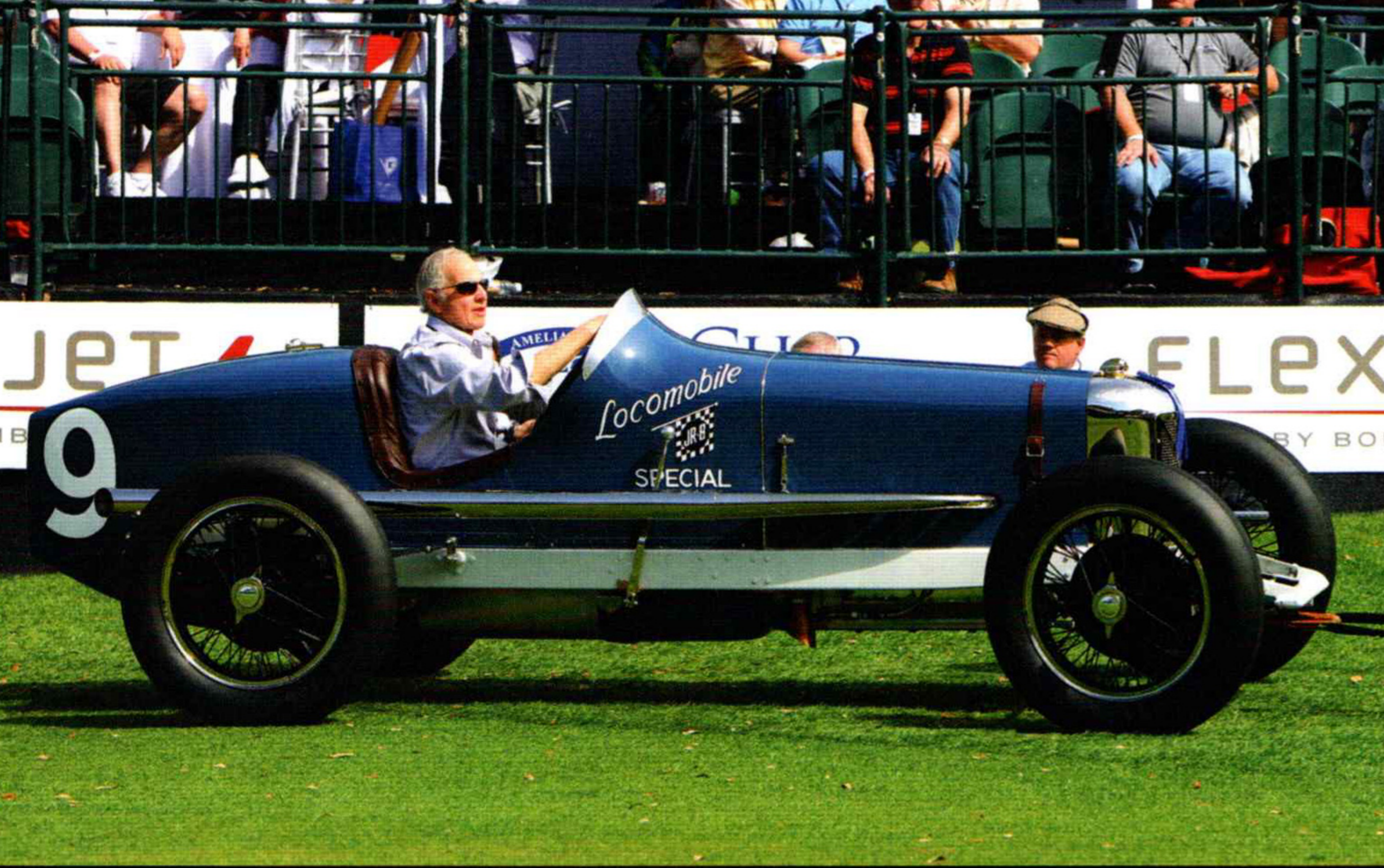
Celebrating 18 years, founder Bill Warner, was in his typical concours mode ready for another spectacular Amelia weekend that would set records for attendance and just about everything else one can imagine. His amazing team of people put this show on each and every year, and no matter what is said or done, it is always better than the year before. The auctions set records and the cars themselves seem to come out of the woodwork. The classifications or categories in this concours are unique in many ways. There is everything from “What Were They Thinking” cars to cars of Harry Miller, to American Classics, to Rolls Royce, to Duesenberg, to Sports cars and on and on.



Most Elegant Sports Car went to Kim and Mark Hyman and their 1909 Pierce-Arrow UU 36 HP Runabout. (Note their White Lab in the front area and their daughter in the rear)

Warner gives justification to creations that most have never even seen before. Their substance is their existence and the attention they garner is no less than that of the great period cars from the 1920’s and ‘30’s. They are unique. As well, the vehicles he brings to the field are outstanding and worthy of any award anywhere in the world. We all know that and we also know that Amelia has climbed to the very top of the show ladder and in many ways is a more relaxed version of Pebble Beach. Pebble has that little extra

twinkle to its name, location and history, but the cars are very much on the same level for both shows. The unusual vehicles are the ones that make Amelia different and sets it apart from all other concours. Of course the way the show is run is one of the strong suits that make it so special to this journalist. Three wonderful days are filled with activities for just about everyone. Each year it seems something else is added to make the decision of where to go and what to do, and at what time to do it, more



Receiving Best In Class- Cars of Henry Miller was this 1926 Miller 91 Locomobile Junior 8 of Sam Mann from Englewood, New Jersey

difficult. Deciding what to miss in place of the thing we chose to do gets harder and harder for me.

The seminars with the famous drivers, manufacturers and celebrities has grown so large that folks wait on line for almost two hours in order to secure their place for a good seat in the auditorium. The once single seminar has grown into two seminars; one on Friday and another on Saturday and each one has a packed house with standing room only. In addition, there is the Fine Arts exhibition each day. The Marque Car Road Tour takes the finest examples of the show and drives them through downtown Fernandina for the general public to see for a few short hours on Friday. There are numerous exhibits of photography, watches and stereo equipment. There are assorted other activities including a silent auction and select manufacturers give rides outside the front door of the hotel to anyone interested. This is all part of this amazing circus called the Amelia Island Concours. And if the cars and people aren't enough to fathom, think about this: one needs to realize that for the past seventeen years, over \$2 million has been donated by the show's Foundation to The Community Hospice of Northeast Florida, Inc., and to various other charities. That is very impressive indeed!

This year Chevrolet chose this venue to showcase the newly redesigned Corvette. Amelia Concours celebrated the 50th anniversary of this American sports car icon in style.

Speaking of celebrating 50 years, Porsche was honored for their famed 911 with a variety of examples and the very first 911 ever produced, labeled by Porsche as

the 901 Prototype. Another special show feature included the single seat Formula Jr. race car, a small stepping stone to Formula One. General Motors had a large exhibit of special interest cars including the famous 2003 "Sixteen" Concept car that produced



Taking an Amelia Award for American Classic (1930-1934) is this stunning 1932 Auburn 12-160A Boattail Speedster belonging to Linda and Dave Kane from Bernardsville, New Jersey.

1000hp and was fashioned after the great V16 Cadillac's of the early 1930's. The key featured car of this year had to be the wonderfully successful Ford GT 40 and its derivatives. Fourteen examples of this iconic racer were present, one of them taking Best of Show for the Concours de

Sport Award. This is the exact car that took the overall win at LeMans from Ferrari in the mid 1960's and established it as one of the greatest American race cars of all time.

Amelia presents two trophies each year for Best in Show. The winner of the Concours d' Elegance Award was presented to the 1936 Duesenberg SJN (Supercharged) belonging to Helen and Jack Nethercutt of the Nethercutt Collection. This famed car produced some 320 horsepower with a 420 cu inch straight eight engine. This very sporty Rollston convertible coupe, done up in apple green paint, was considered a very fast car in its day reaching 100 mph in less than 17 seconds. The car is no slouch by today's standards either, with its gobs of torque or its comfortable ride for the passenger and driver peering out the narrow windshield over the long long nose in front of them. The car is truly a rolling sculpture.

In the Concours d' Sport division, one of the featured marques, the 1968 Ford GT 40, owned by the Rocky Mountain Auto Collection, took top honors. This car, chassis #1075, a lightweight Mirage style racer won the 24 hours du Mans in both 1968 and again in 1969. Its racing history

states that it won an amazing six races in its eleven race entries. The car was on display for many years at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway Museum before being returned to its owner in 1984.

The entire show field was seen by over 25,000 spectators this year. Warner says,



The 1936 Jaguar SS100 of the North Collection out of St. Michael's, Maryland. This car took the Jaguar of North America award for The Most Historically Significant Jaguar.



The special leather seats that help make the 1936 Jaguar SS100 a unique example of an already outstanding car.

“We gathered the very best in classic cars, racing history and automotive superstars together for the 2013 Concours and I don’t know how we’ll repeat it in 2014. Then again, I’m sure we’ll think of something.”

Speaking of stars...the honoree this year was none other than Sam Posey. Sam is best known for being a great race car driver from the early 1960’s into the early 1980’s. He raced everything from Formula cars to Nascar to Trans Am to Sports cars, and

won just about everything he could in as many types of cars as he drove. He raced with such luminaries as Paul Newman, Mario Andretti, Bob Grossman, Tony Adamowicz, David Hobbs and many more. But his life was to be fulfilled in so many other endeavors. He is an established artist and architect with buildings to his name, including several that he designed and stand proudly at his native Lime Rock Race Track in Lakeville, Connecticut among other venues. For the past few years his

voice has graced the introduction to every Formula One race broadcast on network television with an authority that draws the listener in for a deeper understanding of what might unfold during the race. Sam is an incredibly talented man who has done it all, seen it all and enjoyed it all. The grounds of The Ritz Carlton were graced all weekend long by Sam and Ellen, his lovely bride of many years, as the crowd could not get enough of his presence.

The Concours folks have stated that over 300 cars and motorcycles from all over the world were part of the 2013 event. There were other highlights adding to the overall lustre of this year’s event: the only original Lamborghini Miura Roadster ever built, the Bill Mitchell Corvette Stingray driven by Elvis Presley in his movie, “Clambake”, a Cadillac Coupe de Ville prototype not seen in public for over 50 years, and a custom built Alfa Romeo Stradale TZ3s, never seen in North America before, and of course, the earlier mentioned Cadillac “Sixteen” Concept car with its giant 13.6 liter V16 engine that produced over 1000 hp and was 19 feet long! Celebrating the great racing cars of Henry Miller, and his first win in the Indy 500, was the



The Best in Show Concours d' Sport winner was this 1968 Ford GT 40 from the Rocky Mountain Auto Collection out of Bozeman, Montana.



Taking Best in Show in the Concours d' Elegance division was this 1936 Duesenberg SJN of Helen and Jack Nethercutt and the Nethercutt Collection out of Sylmar, California.



The very first Porsche 911 prototype from 1963, tagged by Porsche as the 901.



The huge crowd on Sunday, viewing the cars on the ground for the main event.



This 1934 Bugatti Type 57 Aravis of Paul Emple Rancho in Sante Fe, California drew plenty of attention long before it was judged as the winner of the Meguire's Award for Most Outstanding Finish.