

# AUTO Italia

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# Amelia Island Concours d'Elegance

**STORMS WERE DODGED AT THE 22ND AMELIA CONCOURS EVENT,  
WITH ITALIAN CARS IN A STARRING ROLE**

Story & images by Keith Bluemel







The annual Amelia Island Concours d'Elegance took place at its traditional location on the 10th and 18th fairways of The Golf Club of Amelia Island, next to the splendid Ritz-Carlton Hotel. However, forecasts of storms brought the 2017 edition forward from its traditional Sunday to the Saturday. This proved to be a brave but wise decision: although the main bulk of the rain came overnight, Sunday was a very chilly, overcast and windy day. The weather on Saturday was perfect, with pleasantly warm temperatures and an abundance of sunshine. To accommodate the change of day, the 'Cars & Coffee' gathering, normally held on

the show field on Saturday morning, was transferred to the MotorXpo field across the street (a free-to-enter event run in conjunction with the main concours).

As a prelude to the main event, three major auction companies held significant auctions. The official auction company of the concours, RM Sotheby's, was on site at the Ritz-Carlton; Gooding & Company were at the nearby Amelia Island Plantation, together with Bonhams at the Fernandina Beach Golf Club, plus there were a couple of others in the locality. All reported healthy sale prices.

RM Sotheby's posted \$70.9 million in total sales, with a 90 per cent sell-through rate, with post-auction sales of two high-number

Ferraris boosting this figure further. This was a new benchmark for an Amelia Island auction, comfortably exceeding the combined totals of all the other auctions held over the weekend. RM Sotheby's had no fewer than 19 individual million-dollar-plus sales, the top spot claimed by a 1937 Bugatti Type 57S Cabriolet, achieving US\$7.7 million.

Bonhams reported an 87 per cent sell-through rate with a total sales figure of \$10.2 million, the highlight being a 1955 Ferrari 250 Europa GT alloy Pinin Farina Coupe, which achieved \$2,227,500. A 1986 Lamborghini Countach 5000S QV sold for \$335,500. Over at the Gooding & Company auction total sales reached over \$30 million with a 78 per







cent sell-through rate, and nine cars achieved over the \$1 million mark.

After all the auction action, let's get back to the show! Each year a motor sport personality is chosen as the honouree of the show, with a class dedicated to the cars that they have driven during their career, and 2017 was no exception, with the accolade going to American racing legend, Al Unser Sr, four-time winner of the Indianapolis 500, with numerous other race and championship wins to his credit, including the 24 Hours of Daytona. The gathering also featured a number of important milestones in automotive history, including the 50th anniversary of the Chevrolet Camaro, with a display of a range of competition and road variants produced over the years. Another class was a celebration of the 60th anniversary of the Jaguar D-Type's third and final Le Mans victory at Le Mans in 1957, with a variety of long-nose and short-nose examples, plus the XK SS roadgoing derivative, of which only 16 examples were produced, with movie legend Steve McQueen being one of the most famous owners. This year there was a class for Movie Cars, featuring the likes of the Aston Martin DB5 from the James Bond film Goldfinger, the Ferrari 275 GTS4 from The Thomas Crown Affair (which was also raced in the 12 Hours of Sebring with Denise McCluggage/Pinky Rollo), the Porsche 917 from Le Mans and the 1958 Chevrolet Impala from American Graffiti. There was also the first North American showing of one of Japan's first purpose-built race cars, the Prince R380 sports racing car

of 1965, courtesy of Infiniti, which appeared in the Japanese Prototype class.

Apart from the annually changing feature classes, every year the gathering attracts a wide variety of rare and desirable automobiles and motorcycles, numbering over 300 in total, and one never ceases to be amazed by the incredibly diverse and desirable selection of machinery that Bill Warner and his team assemble each year. It is no small wonder that the show has been awarded the EFG award for The International Motoring Event of the Year twice in the past four years – a real tribute, not only to the show and its organisers, but also to the ambience that they create for visitors.

**ABOVE: Wild-looking 1971 Bizzarrini 128P prototype uses a Fiat 1.3-litre engine driving through a Colotti transaxle. The Glassfibre body was found in a field outside the old factory**

Despite the last-minute change of day, which must have created logistical nightmares for staff and caterers, everything ran like clockwork. At the end of the day, the two major Best of Show awards went to the 1937 Alfa Romeo 8C 2900B Lungo Spider of the A. Dano Davis Collection, which took the Ritz-Carlton Concours de Sport trophy, with the Ritz-Carlton Concours d'Elegance trophy going to the 1935 Duesenberg SJ-582 Limousine of Terence E. Adderley.

