

CLASSIC DRIVER

The Devil's in the Detail: Concours judging

Lead

The idea of a concours d'élégance was born more than 60 years ago as a way of displaying and showcasing the most elegant and stylish cars of the day.

Today, the judging criteria are often based on factors that have more to do with the condition and 'accuracy' of a car's individual components, than with its overall visual appeal. To be a judge at a major international concours requires a detailed knowledge of the marque and individual models, as well as a very keen eye for accuracy and detail. In addition, the ability to place the car within its historical context, while comparing it with others of the period, is important at a concours d'élégance event.

Within marque-specific concours, judges will often provide written comments to the entrants, supporting their decisions and aiming to help entrants improve their cars from a concours point of view. This also allows the entrants to see that the judges are accountable for their comments and their scoring.





The Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance has gained a reputation for being one of the yardsticks of quality within the specialised world of the concours event. To receive an invitation to compete at Pebble Beach is highly coveted, and reflects the quality and rarity of the car. To be placed within a class is a major achievement that often requires months of exhaustive historical research – and nothing short of superb preparation and attention to detail in all areas. The judges' final decision is sometimes down to the smallest of details.

Chief Class Judges at the event are selected for their knowledge of a particular class. Together with their Team Judges, they will assess the cars within each specific area for historical accuracy (as it relates to the original specifications of the manufacturer or car builder, with supporting documentation where appropriate), for condition (quality of the components or area of the car as preserved or restored) and for accuracy and consistency of finish. To be considered for Best of Show, the entry must also be a class winner.



Honorary judges at the Pebble Beach Concours are brought together from wide-ranging areas of the automotive world and have the task of selecting entries for special awards, including 'Elegance' awards, based upon their sense of style and elegance. This is a much more subjective area – and the results can prove, to say the least, interesting.

Preservation classes have recently been introduced at Pebble Beach, attracting a number of superb, original, untouched 'survivors'. This section of the concours is designed to encourage originality over restoration wherever practicable.



The winners at this year's 62nd annual Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance are a tribute to the judges as well as the entrants – since a 'win at Pebble' is seen as one of the ultimate accolades in the world of concours.

John Mayston-Taylor, former Chairman and MD of Lynx, provides expert advice and services for car collectors

and restorers. In addition to his motor sport activities, his concours entries have won major awards and he regularly judges at many international car events.

Text: John Mayston-Taylor

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