

CLASSIC DRIVER

Concorso d'Eleganza Villa d'Este 2007



Glamorous. Aristocratic. Authentic. These are the adjectives which perhaps best describe the Concorso d'Eleganza Villa d'Este, and the cars which gather here. Held in the grounds of the Grand Hotel Villa d'Este, by the waters of Lake Como, guests and visitors to the Italian event can admire around 50 of the most significant automobiles built from the 1920s to the 1970s.

It was back in 1929 that this international concours d'élégance was first held, although at that time it celebrated the most modern of automotive designs. The top prize that year was awarded to a Sala-bodied Isotta Fraschini – a marque which was soon to become a victim of the Wall Street Crash and the subsequent economic depression.





In 1930, the winner was a Farina-bodied Lancia Dilambda and then in 1931, the sensation of the show was Touring's Flying Star version of the Alfa Romeo 6C 1750 GS, helped by the personality of its lady driver, Josette Pozzo. Seventy-six years later, in 2007, the Flying Star Alfa returned to the place of its victory, when Arturo Keller of Mexico brought it again to Villa d'Este - and where it won the Trofeo BMW Italia, the prize awarded on the basis of a public vote at Villa Erba. Meanwhile, the winner of the Coppa d'Oro - the Best of Show at Villa d'Este - was the 1939 Bugatti 57 C Cabriolet, with its Voll & Ruhrbeck body. The car was entered by the American James A. Patterson.



Wandering among the beautiful vehicles on show, set in such fantastic scenery, the visitor can truly feel he has travelled back in time to see the glorious history of automobile manufacture. In front of the landing stage, on the bank of Lake Como, an Aston Martin DB4 GT Zagato is parked. Its owner, Peter Read, sits relaxing beside his car and tells us something of the Aston's history. He talks about how there were only 19

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examples of the DB4 Zagato built, and how his dream was always to own one. In 2001, Read found this car in Australia and, after some restoration work, the Aston appears today in its original livery.



A few steps away, the visitor comes across a whole area of particularly extravagant automobiles. Among them is a Bizzarrini 5300 GT Strada, the property of Dr Gino Macaluso, and a beautiful Ferrari 250 GT SWB from the collection of Peter S. Kalikow. This model has an usual colour for a Ferrari – Blu Inverno – which is actually an Alfa Romeo colour.





But the event is not famous only for its classic vehicles. An exhibition of 13 concept cars and prototypes were an important part of the 2007 show, including the first public viewing of the Maserati GS Zagato. Initially built in response to a customer's request, Zagato has already received more orders for the car, and will build a total of nine.



The unique Ferrari P4/5, built by Pininfarina for the American entrepreneur James M. Glickenhaus, caused great interest. The owner was happy to answer all the many questions, and repeatedly opened the doors and bonnets on request.





While admission to Villa d'Este on the Saturday is only by personal invitation, the public are welcome to attend Villa Erba, Cernobbio, on the Sunday. The reason for the change of venue on the second day is simply the need for more space. By early Sunday morning a long queue had formed, waiting for the gates to open. Surely, however, every visitor would have found it worthwhile when they finally enjoyed the sight of this fantastic concours event.



To see a superb multi-car photo gallery by Nanette Schaerf please [CLICK HERE](#)

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