

Looking Back, Looking Forward, the Concorso Italiano

Michael Rockich

Looking back to 2009

Last August the premiere festival of Italian automobiles convened for the 24th time. The new owner delivered on his promise to return the Concorso to a golf course, which surly most preferred to the hot black airfield tarmac at the 2008 event. The new site, the Laguna Seca Golf Ranch, is located among the gorgeous oak-studded hillsides of the Monterey Peninsula. The fairways provided a carpet of soft green undulating footing upon which to enjoy the event. Legions of exotic Italian automobiles were present as usual.

The rarely seen Ferrari 288 GTO twin turbo was honored by celebrating its 25th anniversary at the show. This road burning exotic is on the list of some car fans as their favorite Ferrari of all time, if such differentiation is possible among Ferrari's past offerings of stars. Knowledgeable spectators said this was the largest gathering of the 288 GTO they had ever witnessed in one place, with over a dozen present in a large semicircle. The cars drove between the spectator grandstands for the moderator's commentary.

Television talk-show personality and avid car collector Jay Leno was present at Concorso. Mr. Leno spoke about his admiration for cars, and was awarded the 2009 La Bella Macchina Award during the show. The award recognized his activities with, and his love for rare automobiles.

Lamborghini's long time, high profile test driver Valentino Balboni was present for commentary, and to drive by in a lovely Blue Lamborghini Gallardo LP550-2, appropriately a Valentino Balboni model. Finally spectators were treated to a drive by of Elvis' yellow 1971 DeTomaso Pantera from the Petersen Museum.

The 2009 Concorso Italiano could not be viewed as anything other than a success, and on the way up again.

Looking ahead to 2010

Concorso Italiano will convene for its 25th iteration on Friday, August 13, from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM. The site will again be the Laguna Seca Golf Ranch. Those who have never attended the Concorso should be prepared. The sheer scale of the event is massive. As many as 1,200 exotic Italian automobiles and many more non-Italian makes are expected. Owners are sometimes present to answer specific questions about their cars.

The grass of the golf course makes pleasurable walking, but there will be a lot of walking required to see all automobiles on display. Alternatively the grass provides a soft place to just sit and take in the vistas of automobiles arranged in various configurations across the rolling fairways. Another option is to sit in the grandstands while specific owners drive in front of spectators while commentators provide explanation and recognition.

Expect the makes that are most often associated with exotic Italian automobiles such as Ferrari, Lamborghini, and Maserati. However many other Italian and non Italian high performance makes that are equally exotic, classic, and collectable are also usually in abundance including Alfa Romeo, De Tomaso Pantera, Porsche, Ford GT, and many, many more, some quite rare.

For a break from the multitude of automobiles, visit vendors' stands. Offerings at the booths include food for purchase, memorabilia, automobile accessories, auto and racing books, auto magazines

sometimes with complementary copies, and scale model cars. Finally, a few high end boats and various motorcycles are usually present for viewing and even entering.

In the past tradition of focusing on particular cars at each show, forty F-40 Ferraris are scheduled to be present in 2010. This “bad-boy” super exotic V12 machine is not to be missed. It is recognized by its wrapped rear wing, and louvered, transparent engine compartment cover.

During the show executives from Alfa Romeo and the Alfa Romeo Museum will select the most historically relevant Alfa Romeo. They will present the owner with an Arnaldo Pomodoro sculpture to commemorate the honor.

For further event information and updates go online and visit <http://www.concorso.com>.