

NEWS

UNRESTORED '56 PORSCHE CARRERA RETURNS TO PEBBLE BEACH AFTER 53 YEARS

*Carrera from 1956 Pebble Beach Road Races to be showcased in
Preservation Class at 59th Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PEBBLE BEACH, Calif. (June 25, 2009) -- Every car competing in the 59th Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance on Sunday, Aug. 16 boasts a distinct story, a lineage that confers personality and history. But just one of the nearly 200 elegant autos at this year's show is making a return Pebble Beach engagement after a 53-year absence: the 1956 Porsche 356 1500 GS Carrera coupe owned by Dr. and Mrs. Roger Craig. Dr. Craig, a former NASA scientist, purchased his dream car in 1957, used it as his everyday car for years, then carefully stored it in the carriage house at his Palo Alto, Calif. home for decades before bringing the machine back to life.

"I first saw the car at the 1956 Pebble Beach Road Races," says Dr. Craig. "It was so beautiful and had that great turbine-like Carrera sound. I was so impressed, I even took a picture of the car while it was racing." Subsequent research indicates this was the 41st Carrera ever made, and the first in the San Francisco Bay Area.

At the '56 Pebble Beach Road Race, contested along a twisting, tree-lined course in Del Monte Forest, the rear-engine 356 Porsche was driven by Don Dickey, who would be named Mobile Driver of the Year in 1958. It finished third in class.

A year later, Dr. Craig was cruising around Belmont, Calif., when he spotted a similar Carrera coupe at a dealership. From there, he says, "everything fogged over," and within hours he bought the Porsche for the then-princely sum of \$4,950. For perspective, a Palo Alto home cost about \$9,000, a Bugatti Type 35A roadster could be had for \$2,500, and a cup of coffee was five cents.

"I was 22-years-old and making \$41 a week. Even after trading in my Porsche Speedster, I had car payments of \$91 a month," he says. "I bought it when I was naive. Heck, I didn't even find out it was Don Dickey's race car until a year later. People thought I was nuts, even eccentric, but I wasn't much for following other people's patterns.

"After paying that much money, I drove it regularly. It would go about 40 mph in first, 80 in second and more than 100 in third. Fourth was out of the question for ordinary driving. The car was always happier accelerating -- tedious at slow speeds, but awesome once you got moving."

The first engine overhaul was in 1958. "It cost \$1,600, so I started working on the car after that," he says. "I also added a set of Michelin radials so it wouldn't squeal as much during cornering. Wouldn't want to alert the cops I was going a bit fast. I've still got those tires and the original rims, which I'll put on the car for Pebble Beach."

During the next few years Craig began raising a family and finished his doctorate in addition to working fulltime at NASA as a planetary atmosphere specialist. He retired the Carrera in 1961. "I determined that

the cost to run a former race car as my only car was a bit excessive,” he says. “But I always stored it inside. It seemed museum-worthy.”

Dr. Craig retired in 1990 after working on the Apollo Project and the Pioneer Venus Project, and he soon began piecing the Carrera’s engine back together.

“It took nearly 10 years, but I’ve brought it back to its original tolerances,” he says. “I still had every part to rebuild the engine. Despite this, when it was time to finally start it up after a decade of work, I asked my wife Kathleen to stand nearby just in case I needed some soothing.”

No moral support was required.

“It ran like a new car and reminded me of what it was like when it was new,” he says. “That’s one of the reasons I can’t wait to get back to Pebble Beach. I love talking to people who remember this car from the old days. All of the stories put flesh on the metal. It brings the old Carrera to life.”

Dr. Craig’s 1956 Porsche 356 1500 GS Carrera coupe, with less than 40,000 miles on the odometer, returns to the Monterey Peninsula in August as one of about eight Porsches on the Concours show field, a contingent that includes not only sports racing cars, but powerful racing machines like the 1970 Porsche 917 Kurzheck Coupe driven by Steve McQueen in the movie Le Mans and the 1984 Porsche 962C that won Le Mans.

The 2009 Concours features Bentley, celebrates the centennials of Morgan, Bugatti and Audi, and highlights the designs of Zagato. A class of Packard Dietrich vee-windshield cars will please classic car enthusiasts, and two special classes of Ferraris and a class of British motorcycles will also take the field.

First conducted in 1950, the Pebble Beach Concours d’Elegance® (www.pebblebeachconcours.net) has grown to be the world’s premier celebration of the automobile. Only the most beautiful and rare cars are invited to appear on the famed 18th fairway of Pebble Beach Golf Links®, and connoisseurs of art and style flock to see these masterpieces. Charitable donations raised by the Pebble Beach Concours d’Elegance® now total over \$12 million. Related events include the Pebble Beach Tour d’Elegance™ presented by Rolex, Pebble Beach RetroAuto™, and the Pebble Beach® Auction presented by Gooding & Company. Pebble Beach®, Pebble Beach Golf Links®, Pebble Beach Concours d’Elegance®, Pebble Beach Tour d’Elegance™, and Pebble Beach RetroAuto™ are trademarks, service marks and trade dress of Pebble Beach Company. All rights reserved.

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