



# NEWS

## **AUBURN-CORD-DUESENBERG GROUP NAMED FEATURED MARQUE FOR 57th ANNUAL PEBBLE BEACH CONCOURS d'ELEGANCE**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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PEBBLE BEACH, Calif. (Feb. 5, 2007) – The Auburn-Cord Duesenberg (A-C-D) group has been selected as a featured marque for the 2007 Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance. There will be at least two A-C-D classes that will be part of the 175-car field of classic vehicles competing in two dozen classes for Best of Show honors.

### **E.L. CORD REVIVES AUBURN AND DUESENBERG**

The Auburn Automobile Company was founded by brothers Frank and Morris Eckhart in 1900, producing a series of two-, four- and six-cylinder touring cars prior to World War I. In 1919, the Eckharts sold controlling interest in their Auburn, Ind., company to a Chicago consortium that included William Wrigley, Jr., a chewing gum magnate and future owner of the Cubs' baseball team. The initial result was the Auburn Beauty Six, hailed as one of the superior cars of its time but hardly a sales success.

Then along came Errett Lobban Cord, a colorful entrepreneur who claimed to have made and lost \$50,000 three times...before he was 21. In 1924, he became Auburn's general manager, added some nickel plating and colorful paint to the existing Auburn fleet and sales doubled in each of the next three years. In the midst of that success, Cord became president of Auburn in 1926.

Prior to Cord's arrival in '24, Auburn dealers had been mainly garage owners. Within a few years, his aggressive marketing had created an impressive distribution network, and the car had become so popular that dealers couldn't keep it in stock.

### **AUBURN AND DUESENBERG DURING THE GREAT DEPRESSION**

The Auburn Automobile Company nimbly survived the stock market crash in October 1929 and prospered at the outset of the Depression, more than doubling their record for annual profits in 1931 while attracting new Auburn dealers across the country. Most of these vehicles were moderately priced, like the '32 Auburn with a V-12 by Lycoming that cost under \$1,000 and was called by *Business Week*, "More car for the money than the public has ever seen."

There was nothing moderate, though, about the fast, big (up to three tons), beautiful and expensive Duesenberg, which inspired the phrase, “it’s a deusy” and is considered by many autophiles to be among the most remarkable achievements in U.S. automotive history.

The Duesenberg Motor Company, founded in 1913 by Fred and August Duesenberg, didn’t actually produce passenger vehicles until 1920. That year the Duesenberg Model A received international acclaim...but the brothers Duesenberg were world-class engineers, not businessmen, and the Model A didn’t reach the market until 1922. Only 667 Model A’s were ever built.

In 1926, E.L. Cord once again seized upon an automotive business opportunity, purchasing the newly named Duesenberg, Inc., and hiring Fred Duesenberg to design the chassis and engine to create a “super car.” The result was the Model J Duesenberg, which debuted at the New York Auto Salon in late 1928, an opulent vehicle with a race-inspired engine developing 265 horsepower -- more than double any other car at that time. By 1932, Fred Duesenberg, who died that year, had produced a centrifugal supercharger that boosted the Model SJ to 320 horsepower, and in 1935, Ab Jenkins drove the famed Duesenberg Special, nicknamed “The Mormon Meteor,” to a series of land speed records, including averaging 135 mph for 24 hours.

Although the stately Depression-era Duesenbergs are considered among the most stunning, elegant cars ever created, they were exceptionally pricy. Clark Gable and Gary Cooper owned rare SSJ 125 convertibles, and the Duke of Windsor also was a Duesy owner. But the extravagant price tag was as much as \$25,000, a fortune in ‘30s America.

The Cord Corporation, which consisted of more than 150 companies, including Checker Cab, American Airways (later American Airlines) and his automobile holdings, began to disintegrate by the mid-1930s. The Internal Revenue Service and the Securities and Exchange Commission began to explore the Cord’s business dealings, and in 1937, the last Auburns, Cords and Duesenbergs were built.

Only 481 Model Js and SJs were produced from 1928 - 1937, and there are still 384 in existence, including four owned by “Tonight Show” host Jay Leno.

First conducted in 1950, the Pebble Beach Concours d’Elegance ([www.pebblebeachconcours.net](http://www.pebblebeachconcours.net)) is an international gathering of automotive enthusiasts for “a celebration of the automobile” at The Lodge at Pebble Beach on the Monterey Peninsula. The Concours, which in 2005 attracted entrants from 27 states and 13 countries and raised over \$1 million for charity, combines a scenic location — the famed 18<sup>th</sup> fairway at Pebble Beach Golf Links® along the Pacific Ocean — with the opportunity to view rarely seen examples of automotive style, performance and history. The annual affair also includes a series of auxiliary activities: the Pebble Beach Tour d’Elegance along the coast and through Carmel; the Pebble Beach RetroAuto™ exhibition; and

The Pebble Beach Auction conducted by Gooding & Company. The 2007 Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance will be held on Sunday, August 19.