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Concours d'Elegance draws larger crowds

By **Jeff Samoray**, OU Web Writer

Meadow Brook Hall's annual international automobile event, the **Concours d'Elegance**, continues to draw more and more visitors each year. Concours organizers estimate the entire series of events, which were held Aug. 2-4, attracted about 22,000 visitors from around the world – an increase of 10 percent from last year.

This year's Concours showcased more than 200 classic and vintage automobiles. The Concours also recognized automotive milestones by highlighting the 100th anniversary of the Cadillac and 50th anniversary of the Corvette. Among the other special features were the racing and sports cars of Frank Kurtis, the 100th anniversary of Pierce-Arrow and automotive artist Barry Rowe, and the Fall 2002 Collection of fashion designer Escada, presented by Saks Fifth Avenue.

"I was impressed with the wide array of Cadillacs that were presented, particularly the inclusion of modern-era examples," said Concours attendee Tom Siligato of Farmington Hills. "I also appreciated the special Mercedes-Benz display of the SL model heritage, from the first SL racer to the new SL sports convertible. The Concours d'Elegance remains one of the very few places where an auto enthusiast can see a number of extraordinary vehicles that one would otherwise never be exposed to."

Arturo and Deborah Keller, Petaluma, Calif., won the Best of Show award for their 1914 Isotta Fraschini KM4, four-door Tourer Convertible. The People's Choice award went to Richard Shonk of Ashton, Md., for his 1931 Cadillac V-12 370A Sport Phaeton.

"The Concours d'Elegance is not only a tradition for car collectors in metro Detroit but for auto enthusiasts across the world," said Sally Victors, external relations director for Meadow Brook Hall. "It's truly one of the world's top three concours, along with Pebble Beach and Bagatelle in Paris. Funds raised support the preservation and interpretation of Meadow Brook Hall, but the Concours is really about more than that. It's about the public exposure to the hall, the press coverage and the enjoyment that some 22,000 experience from all the events that we do. It's really a lot of fun."

The Concours raises an average of \$500,000 annually. In the past, monies have helped restore the hall's Parducci ceiling and supported the elementary school educational programs. In 1957, automotive heiress Matilda Dodge Wilson donated **Meadow Brook Hall**, its 1,500-acre estate and \$2 million to found Oakland University.

SUMMARY

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