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Duesenberg a featured marque at Concours

By **Jeff Samoray**, OU Web Writer

Attendees of the 25th annual **Meadow Brook Hall Concours d'Elegance** will be dazzled by an array of about 250 of the world's most prized automobiles at one of the world's most prestigious auto events.

Among the featured marques are Ford and Buick, which are having centennial celebrations this year. Also on display will be 25 Duesenbergs, considered the crown jewel of the classic car world. The event will be held at Oakland University's **Meadow Brook Hall** Sunday, Aug. 3, from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Among the featured Duesenbergs will be a 1929 J series Torpedo Murphy Boattail, owned by Bill Chorkey of Farmington Hills.

"I've owned the car for about 15 years," said Chorkey, a retired entrepreneur in the hydraulic pneumatics industry. "I don't know much about the history of the car, except that some movie director was the original owner. It's one of only three in the world."

The rose-colored, all-aluminum body features a "disappearing top" (the convertible top becomes recessed within the body of the car when lowered). The all-leather interior two-seater took "Best of Show" in last year's Meadow Brook Concours.

"Duesenberg never made the car bodies, only the running chassis," Chorkey said. "The car buyer purchased the chassis, then found a body designer who would manufacture the body. I also own a 1945 Duesenberg that is a four-door sedan. That owner had an art deco design created for the car body."

Duesenbergs are not just known for their aesthetics. Mechanically, the cars were far ahead of their time.

"Besides the rarity of the vehicle, it really is a beautiful machine," Chorkey said. "It has 265 horsepower. The amazing thing is that in second gear it can reach 99 miles per hour, and 118 in fourth gear. In the 1920s, those speeds were simply unheard of. It also has dual overhead cams and four valves per cylinder. It has no power steering, but it does have power brakes.

"Have you heard the expression 'It's a doozy?'" The Duesenberg is where that expression comes from. It means it's the greatest thing there is."

Though not as rare as Chorkey's vehicle, Joe Loeffler's 1947 Ford Super Deluxe Convertible is just as special.

"I bought it three years ago from a man in Florida," said Loeffler, a retired General Motors engineering executive. "I've continued to work on it ever since. Some of the things I've added are seatbelts, turn signals, and new brakes – anything for safety or drivability. I've gone through a lot of continual upgrades and fuss."

Loeffler had the vehicle converted from 6 to 12 volts, which some vehicle enthusiasts might scoff at, but Loeffler said the upgrade makes the car more enjoyable to drive.

"I kept the old generator and changed its inner mechanics, so it's hard to tell that it's been converted," Loeffler said. "The interior was restored by LeBaron Bonney Company, which is known for manufacturing replacement interiors of the highest quality. The body is maize yellow – a soft creamy color – and the top is beige. It has a lot of accessories, including a radio, bumper guards, dual exhaust and wide whitewall tires. It drives very nice at about 60 miles per hour."

Loeffler had the vehicle shipped from Florida earlier this year to participate in Ford Motor Company centennial events. After the Meadow Brook Concours, Loeffler plans to drive it in the Woodward Avenue Dream Cruise.

"I take the car out every two to three days to keep it in great running order," Loeffler said. "I'll be riding in it down Woodward for the Dream Cruise. It's just a great old car and I like to share my enjoyment of it with people.

"I'm very happy to be invited to show this car at the Meadow Brook Concours for the first time. An invitation to the Concours is pretty much the feather in the car's cap."

Admission to the Concours is \$25 and includes a souvenir program. Children 12 and under are free. Tickets may be purchased by calling (248) 269-7672 or at the gate the day of the event. Parking on the Oakland University campus is free, and shuttle

busses will be available. Handicap parking also is available. Other **associated events** include a fashion show, automotive art exhibition, vintage motorcar auction, art auction and evening gala. For more information, visit the **Meadow Brook Hall Concours d'Elegance** Web site or call (248) 269-7672.

SUMMARY

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