



Monday, August 2, 2004

Concours concludes weeklong automotive celebration

By **Kalee Iacoangeli**, *OU Student Writer*

The 26th annual **Meadow Brook Concours d'Elegance** stepped back in time to celebrate the automotive masterpieces of the Golden Age of automobiles. The lawns of Meadow Brook Hall were graced with hundreds of the world's most elegant and well-preserved vehicles of the first half of the 20th century.

Originating in 1978, the Meadow Brook Concours d'Elegance has grown from a small, local car show into one of the nation's most elite and anticipated events. Continuing its evolution, this year was the debut of the weeklong Concours celebration, running from July 26 to Aug. 1 and combining the Concours d'Elegance and Concorso d'Italia events for the first time.

"The weeklong celebration added a whole new element to the event," said Concours d'Elegance executive director Lolly Bezy. "The addition of the Concorso d'Italia brought modern cars to the show and was a new draw for a different type of audience. Everything was really well received and helped make this the most well-rounded Meadow Brook Concours ever."

The series of events building up to the Concours d'Elegance included the La Bellissima Festa, a reception and tribute to the cars of the Concorso d'Italia; fashion show luncheon, presenting designs by Monique Lhuillier; automotive art exhibition and reception, showcasing some of the world's finest automotive art; the RM Auctions, where registered bidders and consigners bought and sold some of the world's most prized classic cars; Concorso d'Italia, which displayed nearly a hundred stylish Italian cars; and finally, the strolling dinner and silent art auction, which served as an elegant ending to the week of festivities and a classy beginning to the annual Concours d'Elegance celebration.

These extended festivities made this year's Concours an unprecedented event that not only was enjoyed by the car enthusiast but also appreciated by those who enjoy the display of timeless sophistication.

"This is unlike anything I have ever seen before," said first time Concours d'Elegance spectator Karen Ernst. "It's hard to even put into words how spectacular a show this is. It's something that everyone should see at least once in their lives."

The extravagant display was not only impressive to the spectators but even to some of the Concours exhibitors as well.

"There was a really great turnout of one-of-a-kind cars," said exhibitor Roman Tucker. "It takes a show like this to bring out these types of cars. It's a really special event."

The presentation, along with the backdrop of scenic and historical Meadow Brook Hall makes the **Concours d'Elegance** one of the most highly acclaimed in the nation. The country's most prestigious exhibitors seek out the event for the chance to display their automotive treasures.

"Key collectors look forward to this event every year," said Otto Rosenbush, son of one of the Meadow Brook Concours d'Elegance founders, Otto T. Rosenbush. "The quality of the judging and the layout are much better than they are even at Pebble Beach."

Rosenbush, who has attended nearly every Meadow Brook Concours, believes the Meadow Brook event sets the standard and has become the example to follow for other Concours events in the country.

"They all come here to figure out how to do it," Rosenbush said. "It features more than 250 of the world's best cars, and it's amazing that they find these unbelievable cars every year that haven't been here before. Every year they find

a new key mark to set it off.”

An event of this caliber is accomplished only through the efforts of those committed to preserving the essence and history of the automobile. The co-sponsorship of Chrysler, Ford Motor Company and General Motors allowed the weeklong events to take place as did the nearly 500 volunteers who staffed the shows throughout the week.

The dedication of those involved with the Concours events is felt beyond the automobile as well. Since its inception, the Meadow Brook Concours d'Elegance has contributed substantial funds to Oakland University for the preservation of Meadow Brook Hall.

“It's such a gorgeous venue, you couldn't ask for anything more,” Bezy said. “We want to help keep Meadow Brook Hall open and available for people to enjoy.”

Anyone interested in becoming involved with the Meadow Brook Concours d'Elegance can call (248) 269-7672 or visit the **Meadow Brook Concours d'Elegance** Web site for more information.

SUMMARY

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Created by CareTech Administrator (webservices@caretechsolutions.com) on Monday, August 2, 2004

Modified by CareTech Administrator (webservices@caretechsolutions.com) on Monday, August 2, 2004

Article Start Date: Monday, August 2, 2004