

Last year, we attended the Concorso Italiano for our first time. It was held at the Marina Airport, northeast of Seaside (itself just north of Monterey). This was a "peace dividend" former military airport, part of old Fort Ord. The area is sure to get redeveloped in a big way. Recession or no recession, the sandy rolling hills are already being bladed into wide, flat boulevards along a lot of the old familiar back road shortcuts.

The airport site didn't seem all bad, if you'd never attended the event before: accessible for fly-in elements to the show, with plenty of parking. But those who had been before, when it was held on the green grass of the Bayonet and Black Horse Golf Resort, were sorely disappointed and lobbied for a return to such a location. Black Horse had inadvertently sent the Concorso packing when improvements they were making limited available parking for the event last year.

So a new group coalesced, attempting to pick up the torch. What ensued seemed to be a fairly brief struggle between a replacement event and a reborn original. As the dust settled and the calendar firmed up, one became La Dolce Vita Automobili and the other, with its own nice golf resort setting at Laguna Seca Golf Ranch, secured the original Concorso Italiano name. We set out to visit them both.

La Dolce Vita Automobili at Black Horse BAYONET AND BLACK HORSE GOLF RESORT, SEASIDE

Calculating the best way to triangulate our travels with both concorsos and the Monterey Historics (as well as an auction or two en route), we headed to La Dolce Vita first. We had conflicting address information, and signage was misleading in places, but we did find the entrance to the resort. There was quite a comedy of errors from there, with media credentials missing, a denial of entry, an apology and entry after all, but denial of entry at the media tent, as we'd been given the wrong type of passes. We were unable to see much of this event. The cellphone photo of a sparse display, to the right, is basically all we saw. We were,

shall we say, disappointed. Colleagues have told us the event was indeed somewhat sparse, but with the dueling events and preparatory confusion, nobody really knew which concorso would attract what vehicles and spectators. But it did pretty well. There was indeed a nice Lamborghini grouping, as well as a showing of early Citroën Traction Avants and some truly unusual customs. The open layout and casual atmosphere were welcomed by some. The well-respected Larry Crane provided emcee duties. All in all, to the degree this had started out as a rebirth of the temporarily ill-fated Concorso Italiano, it fell somewhat short in attendance, but succeeded in regaining the original turf. To the degree it can be seen as a new event, many are hoping they pursue the broader spectrum of cars, beyond the Italians, and grow from there.

Concorso Italiano LAGUNA SECA GOLF RANCH, MONTEREY

Next stop: Concorso Italiano. And this seems to be where the crowds showed up, both participants and spectators. The parking areas were brimming, and well-organized. This wide-ranging Italian-focused event included a world-record gathering of 15 Ferrari 288 GTOs, a celebration of the golden anniversary of DeTomaso, Jay Leno attending to receive his La Bella Machinna award (and presenting his own heartwarming thoughts about Valentino Balboni's contributions to Lamborghini). Keith Martin, publisher of *Sports Car Market* magazine and on-air *SPEED* commentator, did emcee duties here. There were hospitable VIP and media tents, but we dined at the food booths, which offered great quality and variety, as well as the enjoyable Italian mandolin and guitar players known from the prior event. Shown together for the first time anywhere were

all four original Bertone-designed Alfa Romeo BAT concept cars, drawing flocks of admirers and photographers for the duration of the event. Lili Bertone was on hand, as well.

Martin Loge of Santa Barbara CA received the Best of Show trophy for his stunning 1969 Maserati Mexico.

There is little doubt that the 2009 Concorso Italiano succeeded in presenting the event everyone remembers as the real thing, and details have already been announced for 2010. For this year's complete results and information about next year, visit www.concorso.com.

The 59th Pebble Beach Concours d'Élegance EIGHTEENTH FAIRWAY, PEBBLE BEACH GOLF LINKS, THE LODGE AT PEBBLE BEACH

We always hit the grounds at Pebble Beach several times before the actual Concours is held—for new vehicle reveals, manufacturer displays, automobilia booths, the Gooding & Company auction and so on. This year's new vehicle launches included the Porsche Panamera (see races, prior feature) and the new Bentley Mulsanne, the company's all-new flagship grand tourer (with Number One sold at the Gooding auction; see two features prior).

The Pebble Beach Concours d'Élegance is the granddaddy event that anchors the whole event-laden week. Over 200 classic cars from 30 states and 19 countries competed in 28 classes. Only the rarest and most beautiful cars are invited, and connoisseurs of art and style flock to see these masterpieces.

Bentley, a featured marque for 2009, had the largest presence on the show field. The event also celebrated the centennials of Bugatti, Audi and Morgan, and the styling of Zagato. Motorcycles were displayed for the first time, in a class of British bikes built through 1959.

Jay Leno brought a 1928 Bugatti Type 37A 2 Seat Sports and was a guest auctioneer. Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger also participated on stage, auctioning his signed bomber jacket, which raised \$30,000 for charity, adding to more than \$13 million raised through the years.

A 1937 Horch 853, owned by Robert M. Lee, was named Best of Show (right). Jerry Seinfeld collected second place in the Porsche class with his 1970 Porsche 908/03 Spyder.

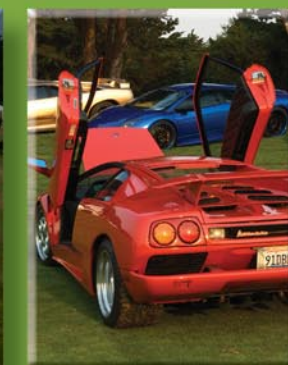
This year coincided with the 40th anniversary of the famous Woodstock Music & Art Fair, and we noted one similarity in that you can spend as much time getting in and out as being there. The luckiest secure lodging on site. For this year's complete results, more great photos and information about next year, visit www.pebblebeachconcours.com. ■

MOBILE UPLOADS

Concorso Italiano



La Dolce Vita Automobili



Pebble Beach Concours d'Élegance Best of Show: 1937 Horch 853



Concorso, Concorso, Concours

