

KUWAITI CAPERS

NICK MEE HEADS EAST FOR SUN,
SAND, CAMELS AND A CONCOURS...

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“HELLO NICK, WOULD YOU LIKE TO COME TO KUWAIT FOR THE ANNUAL CONCOURS D’ELEGANCE THIS FEBRUARY? IT MIGHT BE FUN.”

So went the phone call last December from one of our clients, collector Daniel Waltenburg. Needless to say, the prospect of a week in the sun during a dull, wet and cold February certainly held some appeal and so was an opportunity not to be missed.

It may be that Kuwait isn't the first country that springs to mind when considering international Concours events. Pebble Beach or Villa d'Este maybe, but since the early 1970s the Gulf states have absorbed a reasonably large number of cars from the 'Grand Marque' manufacturers, with Kuwait being no exception. It therefore follows that there's now a treasure trove of fine automotive heritage to be found in and around the Gulf.

Now in its third year, the Kuwait Concours d'Elegance attracts

owners from around the world to have their cars scrutinised in close detail by experts and industry professionals for a variety of criteria including condition, history, design and authenticity.

Apart from enjoying our host's hospitality, which included dinner in the impressive Kuwait Towers, the week's organised activities also included a drive into the desert where we experienced a superb Bedouin tented luncheon in the company of camels and falcons. We also watched practice for an international kite flying competition being held that weekend.

The Concours itself was held in the Marina area of Kuwait City, overlooking an impressive array of super-yachts and overlooked by one of the city's many high-profile shopping malls.

Representing Aston Martin in the competition was a restored DB4GT Zagato from the UK, an ex David Brown DB2 prototype from Switzerland, a restored DB5 Convertible and an Ogle-



bodied DBS V8 both from Kuwait, plus a 1939 2-litre, a 1955 DB2/4 and others to further swell the ranks.

Participants from the USA, Japan, Australia, mainland Europe and Pakistan also brought a mixed collection of superb Grand Marque classics, so in total there were over 120 cars to be viewed by the lucky guests and assessed by the judges.

Ex PininFarina Design Director Leonardo Fioravanti presided over the 14-strong international judging panel which included Andrea Zagato and Pebble Beach Concours Chairman Sandra Button, not forgetting Dr Ulrich Bez and Marek Reichman of course, respectively Aston Martin's CEO and Director of Design.

Best of Show was the multi concours-winning 1938 Talbot Lago T150C with Teardrop coachwork by Figoni and Falaschi, but my personal favourite of all the cars entered was the DB4 GT Zagato that won Best European Car and came third in Class D for

1961-1975 cars – the class won by a Kuwaiti-owned 1966 Aston Martin Short Chassis Volante.

As a personal finale to the last day, my host Daniel and I accompanied classic car aficionado Don Rose on a highly enjoyable blast down the Kuwait coastal road in the pre-war Aston Martin 2-litre and 1949 DB2 prototype. Encouraged by local motorists, I have to say we caused a quite a stir...

This was followed by a spectacular Gala black tie dinner on the last evening, hosted by keen classic car enthusiast His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Sabah, which rounded off a superb week's event.

All in all, the Kuwait Concours was a great success where all the participants enjoyed exceptional hospitality and courtesy by all concerned. It surely won't be long before this event becomes a regular 'must do' event on the international classic car calendar.