

Dawn at Pebble, Stirling Moss and a Bar Fight

I saw at least a half-dozen Dino Ferrari colors that I'd never seen before, and there's something so pharmaceutical about the new Lambos

by Reid Trummel



Early birds at Pebble Beach catch the cars coming to the show field

This wasn't my first time to the car events in Monterey and Pebble Beach. While in Uncle Sam's Army and stationed in the area in the early 1980s, I made it to all of the events for four years running. All of the events in those days would be the vintage races on Saturday and the concours on Sunday. In 1981, admission to the Monterey Historic Automobile Races (as they were then called) cost \$12, and the Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance set you back a \$10 donation to the United Way and Pebble Beach Foundation.

For \$22, it was quite a weekend.

However, the intervening 30-plus years have added so much that you can no longer do it all, and you'll need much deeper pockets. You also need a strategy to maximize your spontaneous fun.

I decided to skip the races on this first time to the new-and-improved-since-1984 Monterey Car Week, to which I returned this year as part of the SCM entourage.

I went to the start of the Tour d'Elegance, which is a drive around the Peninsula for Pebble Beach Concours cars and owners. Watching crews extracting amazing cars from their carriers and lining them up where you could walk around them would have been enough, but I spied Sir Stirling Moss enjoying the spectacle. I took the opportunity to introduce myself and remember some mutual friends with him. Sharing a chuckle and recollections of departed friends with Sir Stirling made for an experience that will prove difficult to duplicate.

Concorso car heaven

I entered my 1972 Alfa Romeo Junior Z 1600 in Concorso Italiano.

Italian cars are like so many Italians: good-looking, impeccably dressed, suave and sophisticated. Even the plainest among them is noteworthy. Concorso is Italian to the core: relaxed, classy and fun. Then add the perfect golf course with manicured rolling hills — and the died-and-gone-to-car-heaven collection of Ferraris, Lamborghinis,

Maseratis, Alfa Romeos and other marques. It was enough eye candy for a serious case of sugar shock.

I saw at least a half-dozen Dino Ferrari colors that I'd never seen before, and there's something so pharmaceutical about the new Lambos.

Dawn at Pebble

I also made it to the Pebble Beach Concours, beginning very early with the Hagerty-sponsored "Dawn Patrol" consisting of free hats (until they run out), coffee and doughnuts for those willing to arrive before first light to watch the cars driven onto the show field. Jay Leno strolled past at one point. Only later, wandering among the cars with the Pacific Coast backdrop and perfect weather, did it begin to sink in how special these cars are and how most of them would be best-of-show winners in almost any other venue.

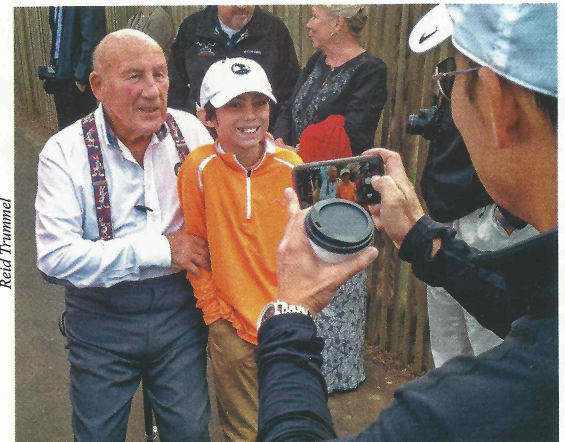
From croquet to bar fights

Then there are the auctions.

Each of the auctions has its own personality — from croquet on the lawn to bar fight — and each is excellent spectator sport. You can also bid on a car, and that's like going to a football game and playing wide receiver for one series of downs. It gives you a whole new perspective with the potential for a major endorphin rush — or a concussion.

It's a zoo, or a jungle, or a three-ring circus — pick your cliché, they all apply. Although most of the events are staged within a relatively small area, the road network can be confusing and some roads will be closed, and you're not the only one trying to navigate them on a schedule. The SCM Insider's Guide to Monterey is invaluable here. And then there's parking. Remember to bring comfortable walking shoes.

Car heaven awaits, and next August is already closer than you think. ♦



Reid Trummel

Sir Stirling Moss helps bring a new generation into the motorsports fold