



ALAN BOE

# Villa d'Este Concorso d'Eleganza

THROUGH THE EYES OF A CONCOURS JUDGE

Article by ALAN BOE



PHOTO: DAVIDE BRETTI

**C**halk up another win for the Count Trossi 1930 Mercedes-Benz SSK roadster owned by fashionist Ralph Lauren. The spectacular black roadster was awarded the coveted Trofeo BMW Group, presented to the best of show car as determined by the judges at this year's Villa d'Este Concorso d'Eleganza on April 22. This powerful car, both in appearance and performance, was also best of show at the world famous Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance in 1993.

The SSK was restored in the early 1990s by Paul Russell and Company of Essex, Massachusetts, and has been a showstopper wherever it has gone. The unique body-in-motion coachwork was designed by the car's original owner, Italian Count Carlo Felice Trossi, and executed by a little known English panel beater, Willi White. Count Trossi, who was also President and a primary driver at Scuderia Ferrari in the 1930s, pur-

chased his SSK as a running chassis before drawing the car's sensational bodylines.

The second major award for vintage cars, the Coppa d'Oro Villa d'Este, went to a 1939 Bugatti Type 57 C Cabriolet with body by Voll & Ruhrbeck. The Gold Cup trophy is determined by a public referendum at Villa d'Este on Saturday. Owned by Jim Patterson of Louisville, Kentucky, the black Bugatti was runner-up for the best of show at last year's Pebble Beach Concours.

Sunday's major honor at Villa Erba, the Trofeo BMW Italia, the people's choice award, went to the white 1931 Alfa Romeo 6C 1750 with open coachwork by Touring owned by Arturo and Deborah Keller of Petaluma, California. This car, known everywhere as the Flying Star, was the Coppa d'Oro winner at Villa d'Este in 1931 when owned by Mrs. Josette Pozzo and was



PHOTO: PIERO VANZETTI



1930 Mercedes Benz SSK owned by Ralph Lauren

returning to Lake Como for the first time since that 1931 victory. The concours is a two-day affair with Saturday's closed show site at Villa d'Este and Sunday's open show at the nearby and more spacious Villa Erba, both on the west shore of Lake Como in Cernobbio, Italy. The concours was first held in 1929 and is the oldest major concours d'elegance on the international calendar although it has not been held continuously over those years. Judges include Goodwood's Charles Lord March, Patrick le Qument, Director of Design at Renault, and Lorenzo Ramaciotti, formerly head of design at Pininfarina. The cars are judged according to their beauty and elegance and the importance of the design for the era in which the car was built. Primary concours sponsorship comes from BMW.

A unique feature of the Villa d'Este Concours, which was added in 2002, is the line-up of concept and prototype cars from European and American manufacturers, some of which had not been seen elsewhere before the concours. This year 13 of these special vehicles were on display, including the first public showing of the Maserati GS coupe by Zagato, other concept, prototype, and design studies were presented by Mercedes Benz, Jaguar, Ford, SAAB, Renault, Nissan, BMW and Toyota.

Of course, this being Italy, there is always an important group of Ferraris present, especially this year in honor of the firm's 60th anniversary. Nine mega-buck models from Maranello were on display, five competition cars and three GT cars, plus Jim Glickenhaus' newly built P 4/5 coupe by Pininfarina on an Enzo chassis.

Tops in the two classes for vintage Ferraris was Andrew Pisker's 1957 250 GT long wheelbase berlinetta from

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Ferrari 250 GT LWB Tour de France



Ferrari 121 LM

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Ferrari 340 MM

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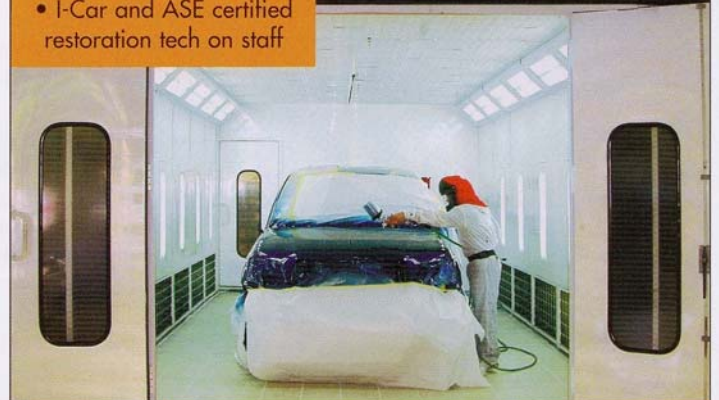
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