

LUNCH WITH BRUCE

VISITING THERMAL CLUB

GARAGE STYLE

magazine



\$6.79 USA ||| \$7.79 CDN
On stands until May 2019



Scottsdale Week

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This year I finally made it to Scottsdale, AZ for auction week, lured by the addition of the Classic Car Club of America annual meeting. The annual meeting was held at The Scottsdale Resort at McCormick Ranch. This was a very nice hotel with plenty of covered parking to protect the magnificent classics that came for the concours and classic tour.

Monday the club held the first "Grand Classic" of 2019. This was a judged show outdoors on the hotel lawn, sponsored by Hyman Ltd. By club rules, all classics must

be on the approved list of vehicles produced between 1915 and 1948. Only certain models of a particular marque built during this time period are recognized as "Full Classic" cars.

24 of the member's classics were registered for the show. The oldest car registered was a 1921 Stutz Model K Bulldog. The "newest" car registered was a runoff between 3 1947 Cadillacs; a Series 62 Coupe and Convertible and a series 75 five passenger sedan. Other marques on the field included Packard, Rolls Royce, Duesenberg, Auburn, Cord, Lincoln, Mercer and Jaguar.



The week long annual meeting included tours of several private car collections in the Phoenix area. Each collection was very unique and included some very special cars, both classic and modern. One collector had even amassed over 200 historic pedal cars!

Scottsdale has some other wonderful things to see other than car collections. The club toured The Musical Instrument Museum (MIM). This is the largest museum of its kind in the world with over 15,000 instruments and items from over 200 countries. One special exhibit featured over 80 electric guitars from the early days of this transition from acoustic guitars. The MIM's Artist Gallery had instruments from many influential artists including Elvis Presley, Carlos Santana, Peter Townshend, Ravi Shankar and Taylor Swift.

The Wrigley Mansion is also not to be missed. Built in 1929 by William Wrigley Jr., it was one of 5 mansions he built during the chewing gum tycoon's lifetime. The 16,000 square foot home still has many of the original furnishings. The estate sits on a knoll overlooking the city of Phoenix and the surrounding area. Mr. Wrigley loved cars and used to bring 6 cars with him each time he would travel from Chicago. He had one for each day of the week with the seventh day reserved for horseback riding. Unfortunately none of his cars were on display but one club member said

the Wrigley's Pasadena, California mansion does have some on display there.

The club had a very creative Regional Awards Banquet, complete with a singing cowboy on horseback and "CCCA" branded steaks for dinner in one of the hotel ballrooms. The following day there was a complete day of "Full Classic" driving and touring through the Scottsdale area. I was very lucky to participate in the tour by catching a ride in a member's Regatta Blue 1937 Packard Model 1500 Touring Sedan. What a wonderful way to see the sites of Arizona!

Pressed for time before my late night flight home, I did get to visit the Bonhams, Gooding and RM Sotheby's auction sites on Thursday. All 3 auction houses had some wonderful cars. These 3 houses cater to European marques, unlike Barret Jackson that provides a great venue to see lots of American cars, especially muscle cars.

There seemed to be strong interest in anything Porsche and Ferrari. Quality and provenance continues to gain in importance to get top dollar. Most of the cars I saw were grade 2 or 3+ with some strong grade 1 standouts. There were, however, some wonderful cars that did not sell. Buyers are getting pickier and sellers are sometimes not adjusting their pricing to reflect the current market.



Some of the most interesting cars I saw included the 1957 Ferrari 250 GT Coupe Speciale, one-off custom built for Lilian, Princess of Rethy, The Royal Lady of Belgium. It was a "No Sale" at \$7.5 Million. There was also a 1993 Jaguar XJ220 that did not sell at \$375,000. Very unique car that was never imported to the US when new.

There were two 1993 Vector Avtech prototypes offered for sale. Both sold, \$500,000 and \$615,000, while I was there with a lot of interest in the house as well as by phone. These were very unique futuristic cars. My last pick was a 1971 Mercedes Benz 280 SE 3.5 Cabriolet. It sold for \$235,200. A very nice car and more practical to own and drive than the other picks of the day.

My takeaways from the Scottsdale auction experience was that the atmosphere is not as crazy as Car Week in Monterey in August. I did not visit Barret Jackson so my experience may have been different than others in town during car week. The auction venues are spread out around Scottsdale but are not far apart. The traffic was not as crazy as Monterey and Carmel can be in August either. Overall, it was a great way to start the year being around people who share a passion for cars while seeing some of the most interesting automobiles in the world. | GSM