



Something for everyone at RetroMobile



1936 Bugatti Type 57 Cabriolet by Graber

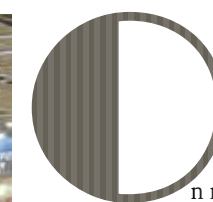
SALON RETROMOBILE 2024

PARIS, FRANCE • JANUARY 31 to FEBRUARY 4

By JOHN MILLIKEN
with photos by LESLIE MILLIKEN



Alfa Romeo 6C2500
Cabriolet with coachwork
in the style of Touring.



in my bucket list of vintage car shows for a long time, is the French automotive extravaganza, Retromobile. Founded in 1976 in Paris, France, it is today among the most prestigious collector car exhibitions in Europe, held annually at the sprawling Porte de Versailles Pavilion. In actuality, Retromobile is a trade show, and a very large trade show at that, with more than 500 vendors and 130,000 visitors exhibiting or selling automotive art, automobiles, motorcycles, boats and even airplanes, as well as restoration services. In the States, we have our own version of Retromobile called SEMA, for Special Equipment Market Association. Founded in 1963, it held its first show in Los Angeles in 1967, but moved to Las Vegas in 1977 where it has been staged each year in November.

As it turned out, Leslie and I learned that our friends and Southern California Region members Mike and Barbara Malamut also planned to attend while en route to a home they have in the South of France. Not only that, but we also heard from two more friends from Denmark, Peter Larsen and Ben Erickson, who encouraged us to join them at Retromobile. They are both automotive historians and authors, collaborating on an exhaustive book on Figoni-bodied Bugattis to be published later this year. The book's title is *Joseph Figoni Le Grand Courturier de la Carrosserie Automobile Catalogue Raisonné Volume II, III and IV: Bugatti*, a rather long French title but to be published in English. We met them in 2021 and again in 2023 when >



Photos clockwise from top left:
 1929 Bugatti Type 44; 1947 Talbot-Lago T26 Record Cabriolet by Worblaufen;
 A Lancia Lambda, one of the most innovative cars of its time; Bugatti Type
 57 Atlantic, chassis 57473.

we ventured to India where I judged the 21 Gun Salute Salute and shared that experience in the *Side Mount Mirror*.

Shortly thereafter, Leslie and I boarded a Delta flight to Paris for the January 31 to February 4th event, Peter and Ben secured for us tickets to the pre-show gala event the evening of January 31 and also a private cocktail party at the Mercedes-Benz Heritage exhibit. Among their gorgeous Mercedes-Benz on exhibit was an all-original 1962 300SL Gullwing in need of a total restoration. We found a lot to like wandering about the many concessions and also got to preview the cars to be sold at the RM/Sotheby's auction, among four auctions scheduled during the week.

MG (Morris Garage) was one of

the features this year, celebrating the Abingdon's firm's 100th anniversary. (Classic MGs include the SA and WA models for the mid- to late-1930s.) Many of the cars pictured here did not have signage showing their year of manufacture. However one car had a rather lurid history I can relate to you. It is a 1936 Bugatti Type 57 Atlantic. It seems it was acquired in 1950 by a French businessman for his mistress and registered to her to prevent his wife from knowing of his deception. However the deception unraveled when he and his mistress were later killed in a crash with a train. The car, a quite valuable model, was rebuilt in the 1960s and pictured here for your viewing.

Next year's dates are February 5 through 9, 2025. ●

