



**1933
DUESENBERG
J-425 MURPHY
CONVERTIBLE
BERLINE**

BY RON VERSCHOOR

Shown one week apart at two prestigious California concours in August was this 1933 Duesenberg J Convertible Berline by Murphy owned by Rob and Jeannie Hilarides of Visalia, California. This impressive Classic is one of four long wheelbase (153-1/2") Model J chassis equipped with this style of Murphy coachwork and according to Randy Ema, one of 38 supercharged Model Js. Its history has been documented back to 1933 and the car has been enjoyed on three continents during its 88-year life. >

HILARIDES DUESENBERG J-425

Antonio Chopitea of Lima, Peru purchased the car in July of 1933 from the New York Branch Office. Antonio was the son of José Ignacio Chopitea, a wealthy landowner whose extensive property holdings grew sugar cane. The Chopitea family clearly had an interest in Classic automobiles as illustrated in this photo from Michigan State University. Shown here are two 1937 Packards parked at their Lima estate and a number of other Model J Duesenbergs were owned by the family including J-465, the Figoni Speedster. The family also owned property around the world and early in its life, the Convertible Berline (bell housing number J-425, chassis number 2437) was shipped to their home in Paris, France. It returned to Peru before the outbreak of World War II.



“ IN JULY 1954, CCCA MEMBER GILBERT ‘GIL’ LEBARON DUFFY OF SEATTLE PURCHASED THE CAR AND FOR A TIME DURING HIS OWNERSHIP, IT CARRIED THE WASHINGTON STATE LICENSE PLATE ‘33 DUSY.’ ”



Photos from top: Two 1937 Packards at the home of Antonio Chopitea, courtesy of MSU Library Archives; July 13, 1968 at the Far West Grand Classic staged at the Huntington Sheraton Hotel in Pasadena, California. J-425 scored 98.5 points in the Primary Custom Late class. The original caption identifies the body style as a “convertible sedan” but a better description would be convertible berline.



Photos clockwise from top left: The thin windshield post and steeply-raked windshield; External exhausts of this supercharged Model J; Unusual exterior door handles.

By 1942, the car was gifted to the Chopitea family chauffeur who reportedly used it as a taxi. In 1952, the car was purchased by Frank C. Adams, a businessman in Lima involved in the distribution of Coca-Cola. The car was shipped to Miami and was then advertised

for sale in *Motor Trend* magazine.

In July 1954, CCCA member Gilbert “Gil” LeBaron Duffy (1916-2009) of Seattle purchased the car and for a time during his ownership, it carried the Washington State license plate “33 Dusy.” Gil Duffy

struck a deal with J.B. Nethercutt to have J-425 restored at the Nethercutt facility and following completion, it was entered in the Far West Grand Classic in 1968. That event took place at the Huntington Sheraton Hotel in Pasadena on July 13, 1968 where the car >

HILARIDES DUESENBERG J-425

earned a CCCA Primary first-place win, scoring 98.5 points when judged in the Custom Late class. It received CCCA Senior badge number 418.

Howard Fafard of Massachusetts acquired J-425 in 2010 and the car was then purchased by the Hilarides, joining their collection which includes a Model J Murphy Convertible Coupe and the JN Rollston Berline. In 2019, the Hilarides participated in the annual Auburn-Cord-Duesenberg Club reunion in Auburn, Indiana where the car won the Best Duesenberg award.

The Convertible Berline body incorporates traditional Murphy styling elements such as the steeply-raked windshield supported by thin, chromed windshield frames and a low roofline.

The raised hood molding that begins aft of the hood ornament extends to the cowl and curves around the lower windshield post where it continues along the beltline to the rear of the body. Center-opening doors are supported by large exterior hinges and the door handles themselves are of a unique design. The red paintwork on the body is complemented by a darker maroon applied to the skirted fenders and moldings. It still retains Marchal headlamp reflectors as it did when new.

From the front seat, the cowl curves gracefully into the top of the doors suggesting a phaeton-like treatment and the wood-finished doors caps feature a unique horizontal pattern. Privacy for the rear seat passengers is provided by the wind-up division window.

On August 12, 2021, car completed the Pebble Beach Tour d'Elegance without incident and went on to place second at the Sunday Concours in Class G: Duesenberg. A week later on August 19, J-425 returned to the greater Pasadena-San Marino area where it received its CCCA Senior first-place win, 53 years after its Primary award. ●



Photos this page from top: View from the front seat; Interior door trim; Prepping the car for the Pebble Beach Concours

Photos opposite page clockwise from top: The Hilarides' Duesenbergs include the J-425 Murphy Convertible Berline; 1931 Duesenberg J Murphy Convertible Coupe; 1935 Duesenberg JN Rollston Berline.

