



Aaron Weiss's
1929 Springfield
Rolls-Royce Phantom 1
Convertible Coupe
by Fleetwood



Paul Whitney's
1936 Packard 1404
Convertible Coupe

SAN DIEGO/PALM SPRINGS Grand Classic

MARCH 18-20, 2022

by Ron Verschoor

Photos by Vicki Zeiger and Ron Verschoor

Among the 28 regions listed in the CCCA Handbook, the oldest four are the Greater Illinois Region, the Ohio Region, the Upper-Midwest Region and the Southern California Region, all chartered in 1953, the same year the national organization was established. The Southern California Region was (and still is) incorporated as the Classic Car Club of Southern California, thanks to the efforts of early leaders in the area, including J.B. Nethercutt. (Read more about Nethercutt's long involvement in the CCCA in another article in this issue.)

For more than 35 years, our region spanned the largest geographic area of any region—half of California, half of Nevada, all

of Arizona, plus Hawaii. As the CCCA grew, new regions were chartered and our region “spawned” the Arizona region in 1989 and the San Diego-Palm Springs region in 1992. We have maintained a close relationship to both of those, as well as with our neighbors to the north in the Northern California Region. For many years, these four regions participated in coordinated effort ensuring Classic cars in the west could be displayed and judged at a Grand Classic at least twice a year. The scheduling was a bit complicated, but followed this sequence: in odd-numbered years, Arizona hosted in the spring and SoCal hosted in the summer. During even-numbered years, San Diego hosted in the

spring and NorCal hosted in the summer. In the mid-1990s, it was not unusual to see a freshly-restored Classic garner its Primary, Senior and Premier awards in less than two years. Currently, the Southern California and San Diego-Palm Springs Regions continue that tradition, hosting during odd and even years, respectively.

Which brings us to this year's event, hosted by the San Diego-Palm Spring Region and scheduled during the third weekend of March on the grounds of The Inn at Rancho Santa Fe. And what a difference two years makes since we last gathered at “The Inn”. The 2020 event was the last event before the COVID lockdown and even the Classic cars ➤

wore “masks” that year (affording protection from a light drizzle, not the virus). This year, cool but sunny weather paired with the front lawn of The Inn made for a picture-perfect setting for 33 Full Classics®, ranging from Johnny Crowell’s 1922 Bentley 3-Litre Vanden Plas Tourer to past CCCA president Nick Fintzelberg’s 1947 Chrysler Town & Country Convertible.

For those arriving from the north, a challenging Friday afternoon drive was rewarded with an opening night Mexican-themed buffet dinner where we caught up with Club members not seen in 24 months or more. CCCA president Steve Babinsky traveled from New Jersey and took a few moments to recognize two new Master CCCA Judges, regional Director Mike Adams and National board member and Treasurer, Fred Lax. Later in the evening, Belva Baltzar was honored on her birthday, complete with a cake and a group rendition of “Happy Birthday”.

Saturday morning, more than two thirds of the Classics on hand were subject to rigorous CCCA judging, supervised by past SCR Director Eric Voigt, with tabulation duties coordinated by Linda Voigt. Three Silver Ghosts and two Springfield Phantoms made for a strong Rolls-Royce presence, second only to the even dozen Packards on the field. Chrysler was represented by four entries, followed by two each from Auburn, Cadillac and Pierce-Arrow. SCR members showing Classics included current Director Paul Whitney, past Directors Aaron Weiss and Steve Snyder, Fred Lax, Joe Conzonire, Gary Carr, Carl and Vicki Zeiger, Mike Adams, Jim Davidson, Gary Marchetti, Erik Baltzar, Sandy Hansen, and Will Singleton, those last two members bringing two Classics each.

The field was broken into quadrants with the judged Classics staged on the upper tier of the lawn. The view from the street attracted a number of enthusiasts from the town while the view from The Inn’s patio provided an unexpected visual treat to hotel guests enjoying breakfast and lunch. Period music, courtesy of Charles Hylton added to the atmosphere and Jim Greene captured images of the day as he photographed each car. Also spotted examining the Classics were National ➤



Fred Lax’s new
1941 Cadillac 62
Convertible Sedan



Sandy Hansen’s
1924 Rolls-Royce Silver
Ghost Pall Mall Tourer
by Merrimac



Jim Davidson’s 1941
Packard 1907 LeBaron
Sport Brougham



Sandy Hansen’s
1936 Auburn 852
Phaeton



Vicki Zeiger’s
1935 Packard 1408
Convertible Sedan



Gary Marchetti’s
1931 Nash 887 Sedan



Steve Snyder’s unusual
metal-bodied Weymann
1933 Model J Duesenberg



Nick Fintzelberg’s Chryslers:
1947 Town & Country Convertible and
1929 Imperial L80 Coupe by Locke



Gary Carr's
1939 Packard 1708
Touring Cabriolet
by Brunn



Mike Adams'
1925 Rolls-Royce Silver
Ghost Town Car
by Merrimac



Carl Zeiger's 1941
Cadillac 62 Convertible
Sedan, last seen on the
Colorado CARavan



Will Singleton's
1934 Packard 1101
Coupe Roadster

board member Webster Peterson, longtime photograph contributor Brad Zemcik and publication's proofreader Bill Manishor. As the judging wrapped up, Paul Whitney called the SCR board members in attendance into a meeting to discuss the current condition of the region as well as plans for the future.

The cocktail hour and plentiful buffet dinner preceded the awards presentation with four 100-point cars recognized, including Paul Whitney's 1936 Packard Super Eight Convertible Coupe. We retired to the hospitality room where conversation covered such varied topics as Eric Voigt's culinary talents, the latest Classification Committee work and the Classic car/Pierce-Arrow-influenced wedding of Ben and Linnea Oakes six years earlier.

The weekend ended with a Sunday morning tour of Jeff and Kim Phillips' Hidden Lake Ranch property and car collection, located a short drive from The Inn. Thanks for your hospitality that morning and to the entire San Diego-Palm Springs Region team that staged another successful Grand Classic. Our region will return the favor in 2023. •



Classics lined up at the Ranch



Joe Conzonire's
1923 Rolls-Royce Silver
Ghost Pall Mall Tourer
by RRCW



The Baltzar's 1929
Springfield Rolls-
Royce Phantom I Ascot



Will Singleton's
1932 Lincoln KB
Roadster by LeBaron



Aaron Weiss at the Phillips' Collection