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SAN DIEGO/PALM SPRING GRAND CLASSIC

MARCH 13-15, 2020 / RANCHO SANTA FE, CALIFORNIA

BY RON VERSCHOOR · PHOTOS BY VALERIE WEISS, VICKI ZEIGER, MARK TAYLOR AND RON VERSCHOOR



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The first National CCCA event of 2020 came courtesy of our sister Region to the south. Led by Regional Director and coordinator Mike Adams, the San Diego/Palm Springs Region's biennial Grand Classic came in just under the wire, on several counts.

Looking like a repeat of two years ago, rain was forecast for the weekend of March 13-15, but thankfully no measurable precipitation was to be had in Rancho Santa Fe. A new challenge was the COVID-19 outbreak and just one day earlier California Governor Newsom had banned gatherings of 250 or more anywhere in the state. This Grand Classic's numbers were below that threshold so the event proceeded with liberal amounts of social distancing and hand sanitizer for safe measure. >

Photos this page: **A.** Self-quarantined Classics waiting for the rain. **B.** Turned out to be quite a nice day for Classics.

Photos opposite page: **A.** Aaron Weiss' 100-point 1931 Chrysler Custom Imperial CG Dual-Cowl Phaeton, LeBaron **B.** Paul Whitney's 100-point 1936 Packard 1404 Coupe Roadster.



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The drive from Los Angeles to the historic Inn at Rancho Santa Fe was rain free and coupled with exceedingly light traffic made for record driving times. Arriving early, I thought this might be an opportunity to sneak into a smaller grocery store for a few necessities. The shopping center at the Lomas Santa Fe exit was packed so I thought better of fighting the crowds. Thankfully, Friday's dinner always has a relaxed vibe to it, complemented by great food and drink, the perfect atmosphere to catch up with friends not seen in a while.

Ominous clouds prevailed early Saturday morning, enough so that the Classics lined up in front of the Inn donned protective covers, perceived by some as an extreme example of automotive self quarantining. Judging was led by Eric Voigt, serving in the Area Head Judge role, assisted by CCCA Past President (and one of the founders of this Region), Nick Fintzelberg. Tabulators included Linda Voigt, Belva Baltzar and Michelle Snyder. Documenting the day's >

Photos this page: **A.** Mike Adams' 1925 Springfield Rolls-Royce Silver Ghost Town Car, RRCCW **B.** Arthur Kahn's 1941 Cadillac 60 Special **C.** Dick Messer's 1926 Springfield Rolls-Royce Silver Ghost Salamanca, Willoughby **D.** Joe Conzonire's 1923 Rolls-Royce Silver Ghost Pall Mall Tourer, RRCCW.

Photos opposite page: **A.** Chris Maloney's 100-point 1937 Railton Saloon, Rippon **B.** Peter Hartmann's 1938 Packard 1607 Formal Sedan.



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Photos this page: **A.** Ken Tibbot's 1937 Cord 812 S/C Phaeton **B.** Mike Adams' 1928 Lincoln L Limousine, Willoughby **C.** Wade siblings Jack and Barbara keep watch over Johnny Crowell's 1932 Cadillac V-16 Town Car, Fleetwood **D.** Clouds but no rain.

Photos opposite page: **A.** Gary Marchetti's 1931 Nash 887 Touring Sedan **B.** The Johnson's 1941 Packard 1907 Sport Brougham, LeBaron **C.** Steve Snyder's 1947 Packard 2106 Coupe.



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events was Steve Horowitz who posted YouTube coverage of the cars on display, just two days later.

Seventeen Classics were on hand, coming from as far away as the Bay area (Johnny Crowell's 1932 Cadillac 452 V-16 Town Car by Fleetwood) and Arizona (Peter Hartmann's 1938 Packard Twelve 1607 Formal Sedan). Leigh and Mary Lou Johnson entered their freshly-restored 1941 Packard 1907 LeBaron Sport Brougham as did Ken Tibbot with his 1937 Cord 812 S/C Phaeton. Also making its local debut was Joe Conzonire's 1923 Rolls-Royce Silver Ghost Pall Mall Tourer.

Gary Marchetti was eager to show his 1931 Nash 887 Touring Sedan and Arthur Kahn made good on his promise to show his 1941 Cadillac 60 Special, driving all the way from Beverly Hills that morning. And drawing a great deal of attention was Chris Maloney's 1937 Railton Special Limousine by Rippon Brothers Limited. Look for more about that very special "hybrid" Classic in the Summer issue of The Classic Car. An interesting coachwork comparison could be found in a pair of Willoughby-bodied Classics: Dick Messer's 1926 Springfield Rolls-Royce Silver Ghost Salamanca and Mike Adams' 1928 Lincoln L Limousine.

The awards banquet that evening revealed three Classics garnered that perfect 100-point score: that aforementioned Railton, Aaron Weiss's 1931 Chrysler Custom Imperial Dual-Cowl Phaeton by LeBaron and Paul Whitney's 1936 Packard 1404 Coupe/Roadster. Congratulations to all three of you on that difficult accomplishment!

The hospitality room was in full swing that night with one interesting story shared by Barbara Wade and her brother Jack. A real "family project" in work is the restoration of Jack Sr.'s 1931 Cadillac V-16 Fleetwood Roadster, a Classic in the >

EVENTS

Photos this page: **A.** Seen on the streets of Rancho Santa Fe was this Alfa Romeo 6C2500 by Touring **B.** Top floor view of Evans Garage **C&D.** A Classic Steyr in the Evans Garage restoration shop.

Photos opposite page: **A.** Fire "Apparatus" in Evans Garage **B.** At Evans Garage, a Pierce-Arrow and a Cadillac.

family for more than 50 years. I personally am looking forward to a full recap of this project and all the historic details.

Sunday morning there was one more order of business: a secret tour of a fabulous nearby collection. Evans Garage is just down the coast a few miles, filled with all manner of vintage, Classic and sports cars, spanning the turn of the century through the '70s. Arnold Schmidt provided a tour of the restoration shop, too. What a wonderful finale to a memorable weekend.

Thanks to the San Diego/Palm Springs Region for orchestrating and delivering this event under such challenging circumstances.

