



BRAKING *news*

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News From the Museum Director

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Spring has arrived and Lane Motor Museum spent the last couple of months preparing the Leyat for the Amelia Island Concours, held on March 10. When Bill Warner learned the Leyat was going to be finished, he immediately invited it to be in the "Cars You Never Heard Of" class. The Leyat was also invited to participate in the Friday morning FedEx Tour. This is an invitation-only tour and consists of about 40 of the best cars to be shown at Sunday's event.



Andrea Lane with the 1919 Leyat Replica as a crowd gathers around

The tour is only about 20 miles long, as it leaves the Ritz Carlton Resort and goes along the ocean to the old fort in

Fernandina Beach. The tour then goes to downtown Fernandina Beach where we have lunch; sections of the downtown area are blocked off so the cars can be viewed by the public. I volunteered to be the end of the tour so I wouldn't blow a pine cone into someone's million-dollar car! I was looking forward to some long, flat roads (perfect for the Leyat), and my wife Andrea graciously rode in the back. The tour leader asked me what speed I was comfortable with. I said, "Twenty-five mph would be fine".



Jeff Lane and Eric deWidt at Amelia Island

The Leyat started on the second pull (thanks Greg for all those hours perfecting the Leyat) which was a relief since every time I started the car on the following three days, there were at



Like lots of photos? Click to see galleries of extra photos we couldn't fit in the newsletter!



Jeff and Andrea Lane pose in front of the Leyat at Amelia Island Concours d'Elegance

least 100 people waiting to see it run. I jump in, release the brake, and we roll away. Andrea is comfortably right behind me, but because of the noise, talking is not an option. It was a cool day on Amelia Island, and I got a slight bit of warm air off the engine and was very comfortable – in contrast, Andrea said she did not get any warm air and was a little cold. Down the long, straight beach road the car drove well – people going in the opposite direction stopped, and many others came out of their houses to see what the noise was.

It took about 30 minutes to get to the fort and once there, a crowd gathered around the Leyat. One man said, “You must sure love your husband to ride in the back of this!” Andrea just said she was having fun. Once the tour of the fort was complete we started the journey downtown for lunch. As we got closer to downtown Fernandina Beach, the roads were lined with spectators as they knew the cars were coming. After parking and answering questions for a few minutes we went in and had lunch, leaving the Leyat to hundreds of curious onlookers.

After lunch the tour was over and we just intended to head back to the Ritz Carlton. Again, the Leyat starts up on the second pull in front of a huge crowd; I jump in and drive away, but after about 200 yards the motor stalls. I look down (no fuel pressure) and think, I did not pump it enough. Ten to twenty pumps later – still no pressure; since this is a problem, I get out, push us over to the side of the road and immediately have a dozen onlookers wanting to help. At first I think maybe the hand fuel pump is not working, but I feel resistance and it acts like its making pressure. Andrea says, “Maybe you are out of gas.” (Wise lady). With a couple more minutes of inspection I come to the same conclusion, so I walk down the street, get a couple of gallons, and pour it in. On the second pull the Leyat comes to life, and I notice six cheering French Canadians clapping; Andrea and I get in and start back to the Ritz Carlton.



A crowd gathers around the Leyat

On the way up we never got over 25 because we were in a convoy. Now we were on our own, and I would be able to evaluate how the rear wheel steering in the Leyat works at a higher speed. Of course there is no speedometer, but on the way back I estimate we were driving at 35-40 mph. The car was quite stable, and on flat, level ground only about ¼ throttle is needed to achieve this speed.

The day of the Concours arrived, and the Leyat intrigued thousands of people. The car won an Amelia Island award, and Andrea and I were able to drive it around the Winners’ Circle to the delight of thousands of fans.

The museum has just finished installing its life-size Fiat cutaway model that shows all the internal workings of a car. We have also put up an exhibit that displays six of Nissan’s Concept Cars that have many interesting features.

Now that the weather is becoming nice, I hope to see you at the museum or a car show this summer.

Jeff Lane
Director



[CLICK TO SEE MORE PHOTOS FROM AMELIA ISLAND](#)



LMM NEWS BITS



Lane Motor Museum Unveils 1950 Tatra 607 Monoposto Race Car Replica



Jeff Lane poses with the Tatra 607 Monoposto Replica



A view from above

In the late 1940's, Tatra realized it needed to introduce a new car in the next few years. Tatra decided that this new car would have an air cooled V-8 engine similar to the very successful Tatra T-87 built from 1936-1950.

To help develop this new engine before the Tatra 603 was introduced in 1956, Tatra built 6 monoposto (single-seat) race cars to be powered by the new air cooled V-8. The race car is powered by a 2.5 liter engine with twin carbs, producing about 160 HP. The race car also has a very unique exhaust system called an extractor exhaust. Tatra designed the exhaust pipe to exit in a chamber just past the cylinders. The flow of the exhaust would create a suction effect and then pull cool air across the cylinders eliminating the need for driven fans to push air across the cylinders. This increased the power because there is no power loss to the motor since it does not need to drive the cooling fans.

Racing with the new engine proved its durability and power so Tatra introduced the T-603 in 1956 and this model remained in production for twenty years. The production version of this engine had a single

carburetor and produced 95 HP.



Redefining a "Look Under the Hood"

David Yando and James Green have recently completed an exciting new installation. This Fiat cutaway offers a chance to see the inner workings of a car in motion. A push of the button brings the car to life but, don't worry, it's surrounded by plexi glass to keep curious fingers out of harms way!

Our Newest Addition!

We are proud to present our newest addition to Lane Motor Museum: our "BMW" mailbox!

Many thanks to Tim Nelson for his work on this project!



Jeff Lane- A Behind the Scenes View



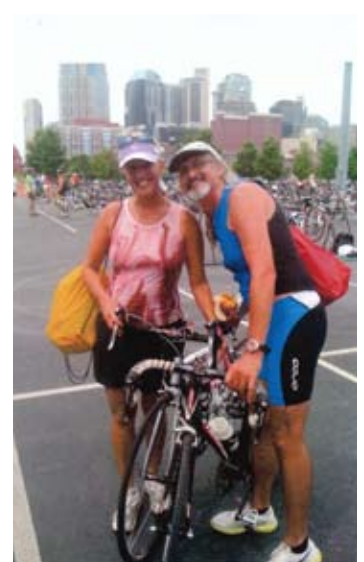
Andrea & Jeff Lane

Ever wonder what a true car nut does when he has a little spare time? Believe it or not, Jeff Lane has some non-automotive interests.

The first one, of course, is his wonderful wife Andrea. The couple were married August 9, 2009 in the parking lot of Music City Canoe; the site of their first date. Andrea and Jeff

live in Ashland City and Andrea has three wonderful daughters.

Physical fitness is Andrea's major passion and in 2009 Andrea and Jeff competed in 3 sprint triathalons, the Muddy Buddy, the Jack Daniel's "Bike to Jack and Back" 120 mile bicycle ride for multiple sclerosis, and the Music City 1/2 Marathon. Andrea is currently pursuing her masters degree in health and human performance at Austin Peay State University.



Andrea & Jeff Lane at the Nashville Sprint Triathlon

LMM Attends the Annual NAAM Conference

Lane Motor Museum attended the annual NAAM (National Association of Automobile Museums) Conference in Tupelo, MS March 25-27. Since the conference was only 200 miles down the Natchez Trace Parkway, Brad Phillips (of Hagerty Insurance) and I toured down the Trace on Wednesday. It was a beautiful day, and the Citroën 2CV and Fiat Multipla enjoyed the exercise.

The conference was hosted by the Tupelo Auto Museum, and in addition to many fine seminars, we were given a personal tour of the museum by its curator, Allen McDaniel. Allen showed us the very rare Toyota Toyopet they are restoring. The Toyopet was the first Toyota car imported into the United States, and it is believed there are only four left. The Tupelo Auto Museum has about 120 cars on display, arranged in chronological order. It's well worth the visit when you get the chance.




The Fiat Multipla and Citroën 2CV on their way to the NAAM Conference in Tupelo, MS.



Brad Phillips of Hagerty Insurance is almost always up for the chance to drive a museum car...even when it's on the slow side!

Andrea joined me on Saturday for the banquet to make the ending of the conference a wonderful experience.

 [CLICK TO SEE MORE PHOTOS FROM NAAM](#)



Curator of the Tupelo Auto Museum, Allen McDaniel (right), shows a rare Toyota Toyopet that the museum is in the process of restoring.

Another Propeller Driven Car In Progress!



A side-by-side view of the new frame (left) and the original frame (right).

The restoration and reproduction of the 1930 propeller driven E'Clair has made substantial progress in the last 6 months. The reproduction frame and metal work has been completed.

The suspension pieces have been remade and we have sourced 2 Indian V-twin motorcycle engines for the vehicles. Lane Motor Museum hopes to have the vehicles completed this winter for the second spring in a row in which we hope to introduce a new propeller driven vehicle.

Now On Display: 1979 Triumph Spitfire Electric



A look inside shows the extensive changes made by owner Rick Michaels in his conversion of this 1979 Triumph Spitfire from gas to electric power .

Now on display is a conversion that was ahead of its time. After thousands of hours of work, Rick Michaels has generously allowed us to display his vision:

In 1992 Rick Michaels wanted to build an electric car. When Rick was younger he had a Triumph Spitfire for regular transportation. He decided it would be nice to use a Spitfire as the basis of his electric car, and eventually bought one from a junkyard with no motor in it. Rick spent the next two years restoring and modifying the car to make it electric-powered. Many electric conversions were done in a very rudimentary manner, but Rick spent a great amount of time doing this car right. The car still has the standard transmission and rear differential, so the driver still shifts. Rick installed regenerative braking to help improve the range (which is about 50 - 75 miles depending on conditions). The throttle cable is still used to move the potentiometer to control the electric motor. With the hood and trunk closed the car looks totally normal, except it has no exhaust pipe.



The license plate tells it all.



These Alfas will be on display until mid-late June.

Celebrating Alfas- Our Newest Display

Lane Motor Museum is pleased to have on display several Alfa Romeos, in honor of Alfa's centenary celebration this year. All three cars are on loan from a local collector. We are hopeful that the coming weeks may offer the opportunity to display other models – we already have a line on a Montreal – keep your fingers crossed! And if you have an 8C just sitting out in the garage, we'd be happy to display it for you!

Nissan Concept Cars- Now On Display

David Yando



Nissan Bevel Concept



Nissan Cocoon, NCS-1, and HyperMini concepts



Nissan Quest and HyperMini concepts



Nissan SUT, Quest, Cocoon, and NCS-1 concepts

What is a “concept car”? Concept cars are rolling experiments that automakers use to try new ideas, new materials, or new looks. They are generally displayed to the public at major auto shows, and the reactions of the public, industry analysts, and the motoring press is carefully studied. Some may never make it to the show stage, killed off in committee before seeing the light of day, although to some extent computer 3-D modeling has taken the place of expensive full-scale designs.

Harley Earl, the legendary GM stylist, is credited with the idea of creating “dream cars”, or concept cars, and travelling them so the public could see them in GM’s Motorama shows of the late 1940s – early 1960s. The Buick Y-Job of 1939 is considered the first such concept car. Some concept cars, such as the Chevy Mako Shark, had considerable influence of the 3rd generation Corvette, while others, like the Ford Nucleon, tried to push new drivetrain development a bit too far – nobody really wanted a tiny nuclear reactor in the car with them!

The six cars seen here represent some of Nissan USA’s designs from 1991 to 2006, and elements as diverse as powertrain, exterior style, interior style, materials, and “infotainment” options were explored, often all at once. Some of the style elements, such as the beltline of the 2002 Quest Concept, are familiar from their use on production vehicles. Other ideas, such as the woven leather “carpet” of the Quest Concept, were not practical and were never intended for production, but instead were to gauge public reaction to new materials and ideas. Many concepts are scrapped after the show season ends, although some manufacturers keep them around for many years. Ford, Jaguar, and GM have all had famous public sales of some of their dream cars in recent years, with many models falling into the hands of private collectors and museums – a good idea, since they are not street legal, and are often not even fully functional! We are fortunate to have these six cars from Nissan, so we can see “what might have been...”

It should be noted that, for the most part, these Concept Cars were not fully functional – in fact, several of them barely even roll under their own power! They were not meant for public release, and underneath the skin we find power inverters, extension cords, VCRs, rough carpentry, double-sided tape, and non-functional switches, latches, and doors. They were a fantasy, intended to present new ideas and only expected to last through a few weekends of auto shows. The fact that these six cars still present as well as they do is a testament to Nissan’s preservation of them, and it is our pleasure to display them.

Starting and Driving the Leyat- An Experience of Yesterday

Jeff Lane

New cars have many qualities we can all identify with. They are quite reliable, fast and very practical. Want to go from one place to another with a minimal amount of effort? Drive a new car. All that being said, new cars can be, well, kind of boring – no noise, no vibration, and very little visual sense of anything going on.

The 1919 Leyat Helico is about as far away from a new car as you can get. First you have to get it started, and it does not have an electrical starter. Once you get it started, you don't want to let it stall because you have to pull it again to start it back up.

Here's how it works...

1. Choke lever up;
2. Decompression lever to the left;
3. Parking brake on;
4. Throttle half open;
5. Ignition advance in the middle;
6. Pump up the fuel pressure with a hand pump to about 1 PSI (too little pressure and it won't start – too much and the carb leaks fuel which blows back on you);
7. Stand outside the car, and with your left hand, engage the starter ratchet, then grab the pullcord with both hands, and brace your left foot in the door opening;
8. Pull as hard as you can;
9. It never starts on the first pull – usually on the third, so repeat 7 and 8 until it starts;
10. As soon as it starts, choke lever needs to go down;
11. Move throttle to about 3/8 open;
12. Move ignition advance to full advance (up);
13. Give the fuel pump a couple of pumps;
14. Jump in and close the door;
15. Release the parking brake with your left foot, and you are ready to go!

The Leyat is started now – the propeller is spinning around, the wind is blowing, and you are inside... time to drive.

The first thing the driver will notice is the motor, which is a mere 16 inches in front of his/her face. The carburetor, spark plugs, and pushrods can all be seen and the pushrods are very obviously moving up and down in the 1915 Harley-Davidson "J" mode V-twin motor.

The second thing the driver will notice is the noise – not from the wind or exhaust, but the mechanical noise of the motor and the rattling of metal pieces all around. When this vehicle is running, there is no talking to anyone. Looking forward, the driver will notice that his/her head is just above the bodyline of the car, and although one can see what's ahead, visibility is somewhat obscured by the motor and propeller. With the brake released, the



Jeff Lane demonstrating how the pull start operation of the Leyat.



The view as seen from behind the wheel of the Leyat.

vehicle moves away slowly, then the throttle should be moved up to full (the throttle is not a traditional foot pedal – instead it is a lever that is adjusted with your right hand, and once the throttle is set it stays in that position and will not spring back.) Keep an eye on the fuel pressure, remembering to give it a pump when necessary. The steering is very quick but heavy, and remember the rear wheels are the ones that steer. With the quick steering you need to work hard to not overcorrect – let the vehicle flow a little bit. As you gather speed, cut the throttle back to keep the speed at a reasonable level. The turning radius is very long, and don't forget, reverse is your feet (i.e. you have to get out and push!) The driver will also notice that he/she is sitting very high in the vehicle and when turning, the body also leans into the corner (it was designed like this) which at first feels like you might tip over, but you soon get over that fear.

Once the Leyat gets moving it rolls along nicely, but again there are a couple of important things to remember. It does not like hills, so if you approach any uphill keep up the momentum. Also, it does not like to take off and turn at the same time. Performance? Well, it has no speedometer but we've clocked it at 40 mph. (That is pretty comfortable, although I believe it would go 60 mph!) Acceleration is very leisurely... measured in minutes, not seconds. The brakes (foot operated) are on the front wheels only, but are quite good.

In conclusion, the Leyat is as far away from a modern car as you can get. It's loud, slow, uncomfortable, and a real challenge to start and drive, but that is exactly where the charm of it is.

If you're interested in more information, there is a great website that covers Leyat's work: www.helica.info

Pictures from the Past- The Early Days of the 1967 Caldwell D-7

We recently heard from someone who has fond memories of Sam Posey's 1967 Caldwell D-7 that is currently on display at the museum. Richard Corrow did much of the machine work and was the chief mechanic for most of the 1967 season. Mr. Corrow was kind enough to share these personal photos with the museum.



Richard Corrow (left) stands next to a McLaren while an unknown mechanic (right) stands by the Caldwell.



The 1967 Caldwell D-7 in its early days.

View From the Passenger Seat



Andrea Lane riding comfortably in the passenger seat of the Leyat.



Andrea's view as the Leyat travels a scenic road near Fernandina Beach, FL.

Andrea Lane

What is it like to ride in the back of the Leyat? My first ride was at the grand debut in Mr. Leyat's hometown of Meursault, France, last May. What an exciting time that was! I watched (and took photos) as Jeff and Claude and an entourage of onlookers started the Leyat. Big smiles and applause took over the crowd (as it does anytime Jeff starts her up, it is truly a thrill!).

Later in the day, I was invited to ride in the Leyat with Jeff on the maiden voyage around the chateau where the weekend celebration was taking place. Without any practice on how to enter and position myself in such a small space, and in front of a crowd, I was immediately glad for my years of knowledge and practice of body mechanics and flexibility training! I made it in and got comfortable and watched from the back seat as Jeff started her again, this procedure is even more thrilling to watch from the back seat knowing you are about to go for a ride!

It was exhilaratingly loud and windy as Jeff climbed in and positioned himself very close in front of me; the driver is actually sitting between the knees of the passenger! We slowly began to roll around the pebble path, which encircled this beautiful historic chateau.

Considering the wheels, body, and seating of the Leyat, the ride is rather smooth. The seats are actually suspended and hammock-style, a piece of leather attached at top and bottom to a piece of wood, suspended off the floor, providing a surprisingly comfortable ride (unless you hit a speed bump without warning from the driver, like at the Amelia Concours tour!).

The Leyat's ride is surprisingly smooth with a very high noise level. The ride is so noisy that conversation is impractical (and so, apparently, are speed bump warnings) so the passenger needs to be on the look out for what is going on. There are windows on either side of the Leyat in the passenger area, but you can only see out them if you crouch really low and lower the seat to an 'on the floor' position, neither of which are practical; I find that the windows are good for picture and video taking mostly.

In order to see out I must stretch up as high as I can to see our surroundings, there is no top on the driver or passenger compartment to hinder this endeavor. Considering there is no top on the passenger compartment, and the vast wind that blows from the propellers, the ideal Leyat riding weather is warm and sunny, as it was for the maiden voyage in France, not so comfortable at the Concours d' Elegance in Amelia Island where we toured with overcast skies and drizzling rain.

When the Leyat drives down the street it is very attention-grabbing for it's noise level and unique appearance. While it is fascinating to watch Jeff driving the Leyat from the inside, it is remarkable to watch what is happening outside. All around us, while riding in the Leyat, as in most of the museum's unique and unusual cars, people are taking pictures, and smiling and waving from their cars, as well as people coming out of their houses, stores, and restaurants to see this astonishing sight. Whether it is a parade consisting of many cars or just one of the museum's many unique cars, like the Leyat, riding is always a parade nonetheless because the sight of the beautiful and unique always seems to make onlookers smile and wave with happiness which transfers the fun and pleasure right back to me!

NOW ANNOUNCING:

RALLY FOR THE LANE

Saturday, September 25, 2010

Have you ever wished you could drive one of the museum's cars? This fall you will have the chance!

We are proud to announce our 1st annual fundraising event- **Rally for The Lane**. This event will help raise funds needed to offset the high operational costs of Lane Motor Museum.

The event will be a one-day vintage car extravaganza. The museum has selected 30 cars from its collection that participants will be able to drive on the rally. This will be a gimmick rally, which means there are only questions to answer along the way. (If you just want to enjoy the drive, you do not have to answer the questions). The directions will be very clear as we do not want participants getting lost.

The day will start at the museum with some car familiarization time. The rally will start at 9:30 a.m. and basically head along the Cumberland River to Ashland City for lunch at the Riverview Restaurant overlooking the Cumberland River. After lunch everyone will enjoy a brief ride in the Amphicar on the Cumberland River. The Rally will resume and tour through rural Cheatham County with some beautiful and hilly two-lane roads. Arriving back at the museum around 5:00 p.m., participants will have completed about 120 miles of rally driving. The museum will then open the basement for a private tour; an award presentation will follow.

So which car could *you* drive? The list below includes all the cars that will be offered. Some will be offered at a flat rate and others will be offered in an online auction with the chance to bid on your favorite!

Full details will be posted soon on our website at www.lanemotormuseum.org. If you would like to receive a personal reminder email before bidding begins, please email Vicki Garrison at marketing@lanemotormuseum.org

1964 Amphicar	1991 Nissan S Cargo	1978 Tatra T-700	1987 Citroën CX 25
2002 Burton	1975 Renault 4TL	1998 Renault Spider	1973 Citroën SM
1978 Citroën 2CV Voisin	1985 Renault Alpine 310	1998 Lotus Elise	1991 Honda Beat
1963 Fiat Multipla	1969 Saab 96	2007 Renault Megane	1991 Nissan Figaro
2008 Fiat 500	1947 Tatra T-87	1984 Honda City	1983 Porsche 911 SC
1967 MGB GT	1950 Tatra T-600	1962 BMW 3200S	2003 Smart Passion
2006 Smart Roadster	1958 Tatra T-603	1987 Fiat (Bertone) X-19	
1971 Morris Mini	1976 Tatra T-613	1982 Citroën Mehari 4x4	

Upcoming Events

Walter Mitty Challenge

April 29-May 2, 2010, Atlanta, GA

Nissan will be taking one of the many historic cars that they house with us to the Walter Mitty Challenge; the two-time Trans-Am Winner, the BRE #46 Datsun 510.

Family Fun Day

Saturday, June 5, 2010- 11:00am-3:00pm

Join us for this fun day that will include special demonstrations and fun for the whole family!

Ault Park Concours d'Elegance

Saturday, June 13, 2010- Cincinnati, OH

A world class exhibition in motoring excellence benefiting The Arthritis Foundation and Children with Juvenile Arthritis. Meet Jeff Lane as he presents the museum's 1952 Citroën Cogolin.

Dads in Free on Father's Day

Sunday, June 20, 2010- 10am-5pm

Father's Day is special at Lane Motor Museum. Not only does Dad get in free, he gets treated to special demonstrations, basement tours, vehicle rides and more!

Keeneland Concours d'Elegance

July 15-18, 2010, Lexington, KY

Keeneland offers a unique four-day event featuring over a hundred exquisite automobiles on the historic grounds of Keeneland Race Course. Lane Motor Museum will be in attendance.

Meadowbrook Concours d'Elegance

July 24-25, 2010, Troy MI

Over 230 cars and motorcycles will be on display at this year's event and Lane Motor Museum will be one of them. Hope to see you there!

Summer CRUSH

Saturday, July 24, 2010- 11:00am-4:00pm

Summer CRUSH returns! Watch as all 200,000 pounds of the museum's 1959 LARC-LX drives over the shell of a vehicle. Have something you want crushed? Bring it along!*

*For safety, please don't bring items with glass or any flammable liquids. Lane Motor Museum reserves the right to reject items that are deemed unsafe. Please be prepared to bring crushed items home with you.

The Mitty

David Yando

Ahhh, Spring! Time again to fire up the lawnmower, buy some fresh charcoal, and dig out the lawn chairs. The chairs are an important part of my spring ritual – a trip to Road Atlanta for The Walter Mitty Challenge, or just “The Mitty” after all these years. One of my wife's favorite events, it's a ritual with us. The weather is almost always great, the dogwoods and redbuds are often in bloom, and the vintage racing and infield activities are always interesting.

This year, Classic Motorsports magazine continues to build on this decades-old franchise, with more infield and on-track activities than ever before. With Lotus as the featured marque, and the cars of BRE being honored, there should be some wonderful scenery in the north Georgia hills. Lane Motor Museum's (well, really it's Nissan's) #46 Datsun 510, the Trans-Am championship winning coupe, will be on display with many other BRE cars. With any luck, John Morton may be there to give it a “demonstration”.

From ex-Formula 1 cars to old NASCAR stockers, bathtub Porsches to IMSA GTP prototypes, the on-track action



Lora Yando rounds Turn 7 a few years ago in the Museum's Toyota S800

will be something to see. Coupled with the free Miata/Kumho autocross, the car club corrals (and touring laps on the track!), the infield vendors and the Concours de LeMons, the off-track activities promise to be pretty great as well.

Keep an eye out for my wife and I – if the weather looks perfect we may bring something from the museum. - and get there early and pick out a good spot at the Turn 5 hill! The Mitty is April 29-May 2, but the main action will be Saturday and Sunday. For more info, just search for “the Mitty” or click this link - <http://classicmotorsports.net/events/mitty-2010/>

Changing Exhibits

James Green

My job does not consist solely of driving fast and cruising around in European sports cars. I do actually work, contrary to popular belief. One of the more labor-intensive jobs that I tackle is changing the special exhibits the museum features. This can involve moving up to 25 cars in the two days we are closed. It is not simply a matter of grabbing keys and hopping in cars and driving them to and from the basement, but it is usually easier than the most recent changeout.

The newest exhibit features six of Nissan's concept cars from the past two decades. They are definitely interesting to look at and hold some innovative ideas, although the practicality of some of those ideas is still in question. When they arrived over a year ago it became apparent that these were no regular cars. It took the majority of a day to unload them from the transporter and put them in the basement. On that day, it was the transporter driver, 3 corporate Nissan employees, museum manager David Yando and myself that got them unloaded. Only one of the vehicles started and was parking lot drivable. The rest were pushed, pulled and dragged into their new basement home.

The Bevel, which is one of the more interesting concepts, I realized would be a problem to move. To open a door, it had to be plugged into an electrical outlet. Using multiple extension cords we were able to access the fantastically futuristic looking interior. The "drivetrain" of the Bevel is basically a low-powered golf cart with a dead battery. With the Bevel plugged in, the battery charger puts out enough juice for the Bevel to creep at a snail's pace if you have 4 people to help push. The steering wheel is vaguely connected to the front wheels. The normal 10 and 2 o'clock positions do not remain constant after a turn, changing by as much as 180 degrees at times. Were it a typical round steering wheel, this wouldn't be as problematic, but with a rectangular steering wheel, it's maddening. To make the "driving" experience even more fun, the front wheels rub the inner fenders if they are even slightly turned and make a horrible noise. It is really not a vehicle you want to spend a lot time in.



The space age interior of the Bevel concept; something better seen in person to appreciate.

The Cocoon, which is the oldest of the concept vehicles, posed several challenges of its own, not the least of which was how to enter it. It has a very cool fingerprint reader in the exterior of the driver's door that will unlock all the doors if you have the correct finger; I don't. The only door that wasn't securely fastened was the rear hatch. This meant my 6' 4" body had to climb over its unique three rows of seats to get into the driver's position. Being the oldest it was also the most deteriorated with many of the faux interior pieces delaminating, some of which just completely fell off or apart. The builders many years ago obviously didn't think it would be around for as many years as it has.

After a number of hours examining the Quest concept vehicle I was able to figure out it was an actual running vehicle so it was one that could be driven around the museum lot. But, it has its foibles as well. The passenger side



The arrival of Nissan's concept cars

door requires cat like reflexes to push a button, have a lever pop out, get your fingers behind the lever to open the door, all while the lever is trying to fold back into the body taking your finger tips with it. This is another car that requires an electrical outlet to supply the juice necessary to use a remote to get into the car so that you can pull the handle to open the hood to get access to the battery so that you start it. This disqualifies it as a daily driver.

The previous exhibit that was now moving to the basement was the Nissan competition collection, which consists of another 6 cars, one of which was drivable. Swapping the exhibits took a full day riding my lovely French mule, the Lohr, pulling Mr. Yando along in filthy, non-powered Nissans. Thanks Dave.

The next day and a half was spent trying to make the cars presentable. Normally I would wash the cars in the wash bay, but these concept cars were never meant to get wet. So stacks of microfiber towels, Quick Detailer, bottles of window cleaner, and hours of labor yielded something of which I'm quite proud. So please come in and enjoy the fruits of my labor, because I really do work sometimes. Now where are the keys to a Lotus?

Marketwatch: Microcars



Little cars, big prices

Dave Kinney, Publisher of Hagerty's Cars that Matter – April 2010

Conventional wisdom might say that microcars had their day in the sun several years ago, and that they're just not the flavor of the month anymore. And while we might



This 1957 BMW Isetta 300 sold for \$46,750 at RM's Sports & Classics of Monterey auction in August 2009.

see fewer microcars coming to market than in 2005 or 2006, well presented ones still prompt bidders to open their wallets. Case in point, the powder blue and white BMW Isetta 300 that was the very last lot at RM's Monterey sale. It sold for almost \$47,000, a strong price in any market. Microcars are majorly cute, and the dirty little secret in the collector car world is the fact that you can pull up in one at virtually any car show on the planet and watch the crowd migrate from the rich dude's Ferrari to your Goggomobil.

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