

Pacific Northwest Concours d'Elegance

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This year's Pacific Northwest Concours d'Elegance (previously known as the Kirkland Concours) was held on the lawn at America's Car Museum on a sunny Sunday, September 7. That was the same weekend as our region's Cannon Beach drive, so many of our members were absent. But for those who couldn't leave town for Cannon Beach the PNW Concours served as a good way to pass a pleasant afternoon surrounded by fine automobiles.

Last year's event included a separate Ferrari class along with significant Prancing Horses from John Goodman's collection (October 2013 Amici di Maranello), but that was not in the cards this year. This year, the Italian blood line of Maranello was seriously anemic. The emphasis was classic automobiles, American muscle cars and tail fins, and BMW. However, that's not a bad thing, as we all need a little variety in our lives, and the field was full of beautiful car candy with proud owners vying for recognition at this prestigious collector showcase. It's just that, at first glance, there wasn't much to get a Tifosi's pulse racing. But thanks to local collector Bruce Wanta, a little Italian flavor was thrown in the mix, and I had the pleasure of spending a few minutes with him at the Concours.

Bruce has an eclectic mix of cars that, like most car collections, reflects his own personality and automotive tastes. Early on, he was bitten by the car bug and dreamed of collecting as a teen. It was a time when so many young boys of the Boomer generation first picked up a copy of Road and Track or Car and Driver. "Probably when I was 13 or 14 I started reading the magazines. When I was 15 years old I made my first list of cars - a dozen cars that I would want to collect." As time



Bruce Wanta, center, without hat, explains the finer points of his prized Maserati Bora. The Bora was at the top of his first collection car list.

went on, life pushed dreams aside, but not out of the picture. "I didn't start collecting until just a few years back, about six years ago. Then I got serious about it. In my mind, I was always a collector, but there was no time. So I realized it was never going to get any easier. (There are) about 25 cars in my collection now." Dream realized, his growing collection now includes muscle cars, street rods, and sports cars.

The sports cars Bruce entered in the Concours included his first Ferrari, a 1992 512TR, a 1974 Maserati Bora, 1973 De Tomaso Pantera, and a unique 1967 Ghia 450SS with Chrysler running gear and a body by Carrozzeria Ghia.

Right now, Bruce only has one Ferrari in his collection, the Rosso Corsa 512TR that was on the field at the Concours. "I bought the car about

four years ago. It was a local car. I love the iconic design of the 512TR." In addition to the looks, the weight distribution and handling suits him just fine too. "It made an easy choice to go with the 512." While examining Bruce's Testarossa, I mentioned the high cost of maintenance and the difficulty finding replacement parts, such as the unobtainium front light lenses featured in a recent Prancing Horse magazine article by Will Diefenbach. With a knowing smile, his comment was, "Don't tell me what it costs. I don't want to know." I got the impression that Bruce was already aware of the high cost of Ferrari ownership. Hopefully, that won't deter him from adding more Maranello machines to his stable.

Moving on to Bruce's Maserati Bora, I asked, Why the Bora? His eyes lit up as he explained, "The Bora has held my interest ever since I was a kid.



Above - Lost in a sea of muscle cars and hot rods. The lone Ferrari at the Pacific Northwest Concours was Bruce Wanta's 1992 512TR.

Top Right: They just don't make 'em like they used to. A Cadillac land yacht from the past transports a couple of tons of America's natural resources onto the show field.

Bottom Right - BMW was a featured mark at the 2014 PNW Concours, and this immaculate 1959 507 Roadster took second in class.



When I made my first list of cars that I would want to collect, the Bora was number one on the list. There was an issue of Road and Track that had one on the cover, it would have been in the seventies. I just loved the look of the car, the Giugiaro styling, the fabulous design. And this one, a friend of mine, Frank Mandarano, found for me. Frank being a big Maserati enthusiast, he knew I was looking for a Bora, so he started making some calls. He got me in touch with a guy on the East coast who had this car. The car is fun and unique. There are a lot of Boras in the U.S., I think there were 512 made, and about half were Euro spec and half were American spec, with the ugly bumpers on the front for crash tests. This is a true Euro Bora; there's only a handful of them in the U.S. A lot of guys have taken the bumpers off of their American spec cars and put Euro bumpers on (but not this one). This is an actual European car. It was shipped to Israel when it was new, then made its way into Canada, and eventually into the U.S."

How is the Bora behind the wheel? "It's a great car to drive. It's a grand touring car that was meant to just cruise down the highway. It's a smooth running car. It's got these hydraulic brakes that are a little unusual, but you get used to them." The Bora sports a stainless steel roof, some interesting wheel covers, and a carpeted engine cover. "That's the style they all came with. And the stainless steel roof. That was the look of the car. The interior is original (but pretty much everybody has had to replace the carpet on the engine cover." Bruce's brilliant blue Bora, fresh from the Concorso Italiano, scored a third in the Collector Class at the Pacific Northwest Concours.

Another interesting car in Bruce's collection, with Italian heritage, is the Ghia 450SS. It might be said that this classy looking convertible combined the best of two worlds with an elegant Italian body designed by Giorgetto Giugiaro covering reliable and robust Chrysler mechanicals. The Concours

judges obviously thought very highly of the car as Bruce drove the 450SS home with the top award in the European Body/American Power Class.

Even though the Italian contingent at the 2014 Pacific Northwest Concorso d'Elegance was sparse this year, an impressive entry of world class collector cars drew a good crowd of auto enthusiasts. The expansive lawn in the shadow of America's Car Museum is an excellent venue for this prestigious Concours and looks grand when it's covered with world class collector cars, and a happy crowd. It doesn't hurt that admission to America's Car Museum is included with your Concours ticket.

As our gloomy fall and winter looms, a day in the September sun surrounded by fine automobiles feels good. And thanks, Bruce Wanta, for bringing some Italian flair to counter balance the Teutonic engineering excellence of BMW, the home grown styling of American hotrods, tail fins, and muscle cars, and the Classics.