

## Greenwich Concours d'Elegance 2012 - American Motor Cars and their Stories

Since 1996, *automobile collectors* and *enthusiasts* have gathered at the [Greenwich Concours d'Elegance](#) held in **Greenwich, Connecticut** for the opportunity to experience exceptional, rare, and vintage vehicles, as well as mix, mingle, and share stories. This luxury two-day event founded by **Bruce Wennerstrom** and his late wife, **Genia Wennerstrom**, is the perfect opportunity to dream, to share the passion, and perhaps to even purchase an exceptional vehicle of your own.

For those who have never attended a concours d'elegance, it is a by-invitation-only judged show of exceptional vehicles. The Greenwich Concours d'Elegance is a highly respected two-day show held annually in June focusing on American vehicles one day, and European vehicles the next day.



**Bruce Wennerstrom Talks about Motor Cars**

However, what makes the Greenwich Concours d'Elegance truly remarkable is not only the magnificent collection of motor cars and motorcycles on display, it is the people, beginning with founder **Bruce Wennerstrom**, a passionate collector, as well as a knowledgeable and sought after television and radio show guest. Bruce's expertise as well as his passion for all things automotive is the driving force behind the success of the Greenwich Concours d'Elegance. His enthusiasm is clearly contagious as demonstrated by both the presenters and those attending the show, and provides the opportunity to see and photograph the magnificent collections as well as to meet and share the passion with the owners and hear their unique stories.

Luxury Experience had the opportunity to meet several owners and learn the interesting stories behind their American vehicles. Meet a few of the people who made the 2012 Greenwich Concours d'Elegance a memorable experience for us.



**1927 Ford Model T Roadster Pickup**

For **Francis X. Tuoti**, owner of red and black **1927 Ford Model T Roadster Pickup**, which was the last year that Ford made the Model T, the Greenwich Concours d'Elegance is more than just an impressive display of motor cars, it is also a time to celebrate his passion with others.



**Francis X. Tuoti**

Together with his friends, **Parker and Gwen Ackley**, **Francis X. Tuoti** brought the 1920s to life. Dressed in period clothing, they got into the spirit by creating a unique vignette that included a prohibition era still, replica Tommy gun, a table and chairs set for a lovely picnic lunch, and music supplied by a hand-cranked Victrola. Speaking with this engaging trio, we felt as if we had either stepped back in time, or walked onto a film set about the legendary Al Capone, as we learned about the 1927 Ford Model T Roadster Pickup as well as about the 1920s.



**Parker and Gwen Ackley, Francis X. Tuoti**



**Gwen Ackley, Francis X. Tuoti, and Debra ready for action**

**Paul and Hadley Veeder** dressed in authentic 1930s clothing, not only provided a bit of window dressing as "Mr. and Mrs. Chrysler," they also shared the interesting story of an unrestored **1937 Chrysler Imperial Model C-15 Town Car** owned by **Howard Kroplick**, who purchased it in January 2012.



**Paul and Hadley Veeder**

This luxury "one-of-one" seven-passenger limousine was custom built by LeBaron for Della Chrysler, wife of

Created by: Debra C. Argen and Edward F. Nesta

Walter P. Chrysler. A few of the highlights include a custom bar, scripted LeBaron nameplates, and the initials "BCG" on the rear door for Bernice Chrysler Garbisch, daughter of Della and Walter, who later inherited it. The vehicle has an aluminum body, a straight 8-cylinder in-line engine, a length of 19.5 feet, a width of 6.5 feet, a height of 5.8 feet, and a wheelbase of 11.6 feet.



**Hadley Veeder**

For owner **Henri M. David, Jr.**, his bright yellow **1949 Hillegass Sprint Car Racer** emblazoned with number "23," is meant to be raced, despite the fact that it is 63 years old. What makes his vehicle so remarkable and rare is that Hiram Hillegass only built three tube-frame sprint cars in 1949. The American 1949 Hillegass Sprint Car Racer is one of only two "wide body" cars.



**Debra and Henri M. David Jr.**

### **1949 Hillegass Sprint Car Racer**

Originally built for Tom Concannon, who raced it from 1949 through 1959, in the competent hands of Henri M. David, Jr., the Hillegass Sprint Car Racer continues its racing legacy. Henri has raced it at Lime Rock Park in Lakeville, Connecticut, and on the oval track at the New Hampshire Motor Speedway in Loudon, New Hampshire, where the racer has reached a speed of 100 mph on the tracks.

Although he had never owned one, **George Manelski** always loved the **1950 Ford Custom Convertible**. Two years ago, for his 75th birthday, his son, Robert Manelski realized his dream by presenting him with a

Created by: Debra C. Argen and Edward F. Nesta

fully restored navy blue 1950 Ford Custom Convertible. The beautifully and lovingly restored vehicle received a Dearborn award, the highest Club award possible for a restored vehicle.



**George Manelski sitting in his  
1950 Ford Custom Convertible**

The restoration was a labor of love that took Seattle-based Robert 10 years to complete. During that time, whenever George came to visit, Robert had to move the car to keep the purchase and restoration a secret from his father. The gift was definitely a huge surprise when Robert invited his father to attend a large Seattle car show, and presented George with the car at the show.



**1950 Ford Custom Convertible**

What is especially interesting about attending the Greenwich Concours d'Elegance is the ability to see very rare vehicles, which was the case of the **1954 Packard Panther Roadster**, as the company only made four of them, and is part of The Morano Collection.

Speaking with **Ralph and Kelly Morano**, we learned about the family's passion for Packards, which now total 65 Packards in their growing collection. Their copper and black 1954 Packard Panther Roadster was actually a prototype made for Don Mitchell, owner of the Mitchell-Bentley Company, which he used as his personal car.



**Ralph and Kelly Morano**

**1954 Packard Panther Roadster**

For owner, **Louis "Lou" Commisso**, his newest love is a **1956 Cadillac El Dorado Biarritz Convertible**, which he purchased in 2008, and is his third vintage Cadillac. A few interesting car facts about this 2-door, cream stunner is that in 1956 they added the Eldorado script with fender crest, and twin hood ornament. The car has a length of 18.5 feet, width of 6.6-feet, and a wheelbase of 10.75 feet. To give you a comparison, a 2012 Chevrolet Suburban ¾ ton, 8-passenger, has a length 18.5 feet, a width of 6.5 feet, a height of 6.4 feet, and a wheelbase of 10.8 feet.



**Louis "Lou" Commisso**

**1956 Cadillac El Dorado Biarritz Convertible**

Growing up in the United Kingdom, **Kevin Kingsland** dreamed of owning a 1950s American car, specifically, the Chevrolet Impala, which was introduced in 1958. One and half years ago, he made his dream a reality when he purchased the two-tone colonial cream and optic green **1958 Chevrolet Impala Coupe**, a two-door beauty with a length 17.3 feet, a width of 6.4 feet, a height of 4.7 feet, and a wheelbase of 10 feet. The car has special California one-piece chrome bumpers, original exterior color paint and original tri-color striped seats.



**Kevin Kingsland**

**1958 Chevrolet Impala Coupe**

Another 1950s rarity was the gorgeous red **1957 Dual-Ghia D-500 Convertible** owned by **Ed and Carole Blumenthal** since 1995, which features a beige and red interior. Made between 1956 and 1958, the company only produced 117, of which only 32 were known to be in existence as of July 2006.



**Edward Blumenthal**

**1957 Dual-Ghia D-500 Convertible**

The Dual-Ghia was designed by Chrysler and was a collaboration using a Dodge frame and drive-train that was transported to Italy where the bodywork was completed by the Italian Coachbuilder Ghia, who used leathered covered mallets to shape the body. The Dual Ghia has a 315 CID 4-bbl. 230 hp (172 kW) V8 engine, two-speed automatic transmission, a length of 16.9 feet, a width of 6.5 feet, and a wheelbase of 9.5 feet.

When it comes to motor cars, beauty is not only in the eye of the beholder, it is also in the passion of the enthusiasts.

Read more on the **Greenwich Concours d'Elegance 2012** in the **Antiques** section.

Follow **Greenwich Concours d'Elegance** on Facebook at:

[www.Facebook.com/pages/Greenwich-Concours-dElegance/114931775205518](http://www.Facebook.com/pages/Greenwich-Concours-dElegance/114931775205518).

Follow **Luxury Experience** on Facebook at: [www.Facebook.com/LuxuryExperience](http://www.Facebook.com/LuxuryExperience).

For information on participating or attending the next **Greenwich Concours d'Elegance** taking place June 1-2, 2013, please contact Bruce Wennerstrom or visit the website: [www.GreenwichConcours.com](http://www.GreenwichConcours.com).

Created by: Debra C. Argen and Edward F. Nesta



**Greenwich Concours d'Elegance**  
**30 Sumner Road**  
**Greenwich, Connecticut 06831**  
**United States**  
**Telephone:+1-203-618-0460**  
**Fax:+1-203-618-0460**  
**Contact:Bruce Wennerstrom**  
**Email:[GreenwichConcour@aol.com](mailto:GreenwichConcour@aol.com)**  
**Website:[www.GreenwichConcours.com](http://www.GreenwichConcours.com)**

© September 2012. Luxury Experience. [www.LuxuryExperience.com](http://www.LuxuryExperience.com). All rights reserved.