



ASSOULINE'S GORGEOUS NEW BOOK CELEBRATES THE WORLD OF CLASSIC CAR CONCOURS

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As you've seen from our coverage of [Pebble Beach](#) and as the name implies, a concours d'elegance is literally a competition in which elegance in automotive form triumphs over all – and often extends to the participants and spectators as well.

In the first suitably stylish book on the subject – [The Concours](#), from [Assouline](#) – author and longtime Pebble Beach judge Ken Gross comprehensive guide to "the origins and histories that have made these events the benchmark stage for display and discussion of automotive treasures, the fashions that have accompanied them, and the cultural impact these festivals have had on society at large."



This includes not only the major concours events themselves, which extend far beyond Pebble Beach, but the details of car selection and judging; the very best classic car auctions, which often accompany the top concours; the thrill of racing and touring in concours-worthy classic cars; and the Concours Club in Miami, a cool new country club for car lovers that carries on the traditions in an innovative way.



Gross writes that "the historic Concours d'Elegance, born more than a century ago and in the storied era of luxurious horse-drawn carriages, was a juried celebration of style and elegance. At first it was a favored pastime of the very wealthy. Privileged patrons of the carriage trade, working closely with the leading fashion couturiers of the day, gathered to compete with bespoke designed vehicles accompanied by women wearing beautifully coordinated ensembles."



"When the motorcar first appeared, many of the same coachbuilders and their patrons elevated the competition to the next level, but now the ladies and their designer outfits complemented the latest, most expensive custom-built automobiles," he notes. "These friendly competitions reached their peak in the late 1930s, the heyday of coach-built automobiles."



Their popularity later waned as coachbuilding all but died out, but true connoisseurs of automotive beauty revived them or started new ones around the world when the value of iconic classic cars and even more recent creations began to climb, showing that "the appreciation of fine automobiles is a passion that knows no borders."



Over time, "these events have become definitive automotive lifestyle destinations and cultural melting pots of shared collecting knowledge," Gross writes, inspiring, most recently, the establishment of the Concoirs Club which cost around \$220 million to build and will incorporate features such as a private racetrack along with a spa, restaurant, and bar.

"Today's supercars cannot be driven to levels anywhere near their potential on public roads," Gross notes. "The Concoirs Club allows for cars—and their owners—to exercise their full potential in a controlled setting, with personalized instruction. [It] succeeds in paying tribute to the concoirs

d'elegance while still moving it forward into a luxurious forward-thinking future. The very same aficionados who gathered to display their hand-crafted horse-drawn carriages have evolved into twenty-first-century enthusiasts who continue to demand excellence from not only their cars, but their lives."