

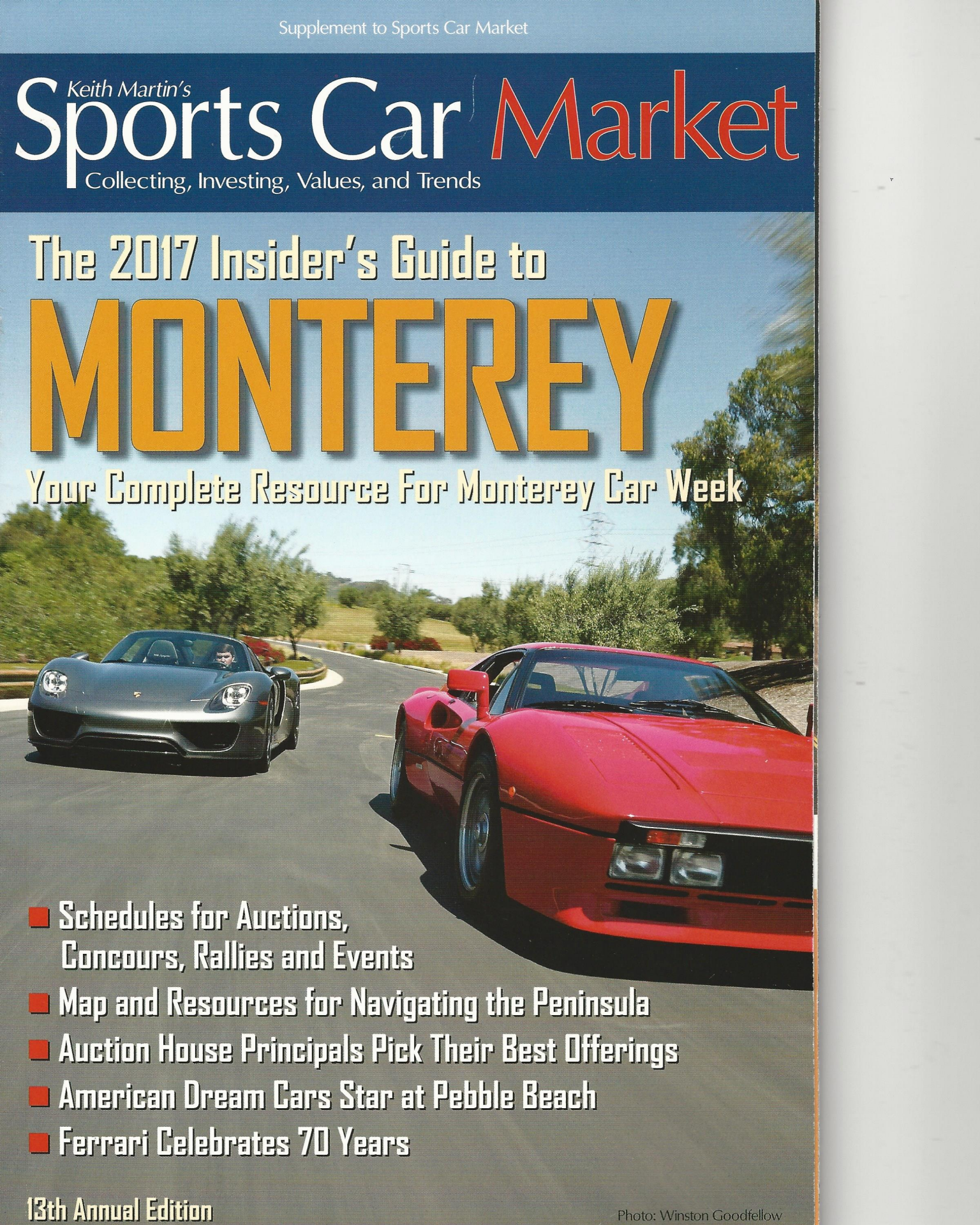
Keith Martin's Sports Car Market

Collecting, Investing, Values, and Trends

The 2017 Insider's Guide to

MONTEREY

Your Complete Resource For Monterey Car Week

- 
- Schedules for Auctions, Concours, Rallies and Events
 - Map and Resources for Navigating the Peninsula
 - Auction House Principals Pick Their Best Offerings
 - American Dream Cars Star at Pebble Beach
 - Ferrari Celebrates 70 Years



Bobby Darrin and the DiDia 150

American Dreams at Pebble

The Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance presents a unique, one-time class of memorable designs *not* from the studios of the Big Three

by Ken Gross

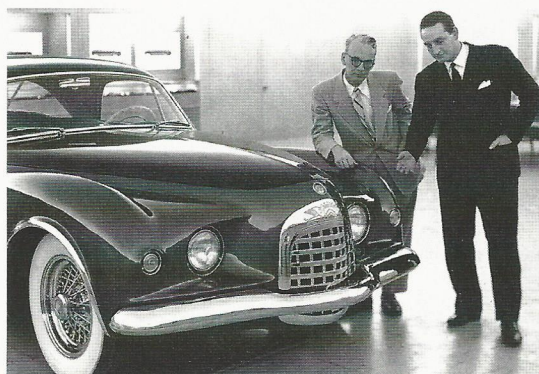
After World War II ended, U.S. automakers resumed full production. The sleek shapes and bold styling elements of mid-century new model cars were initially influenced by jet aircraft and rockets, which were considered the epitome of advanced aerodynamics and engineering.

We know from surviving sketches that even more futuristic concepts were rendered for internal presentations, but mass-production requirements dictated more practical cars. General Motors' fabulous traveling Motorama shows were seen coast-to-coast, dazzling thousands of attendees while displaying impractical four-wheeled fantasies that were never meant for dealer showrooms.

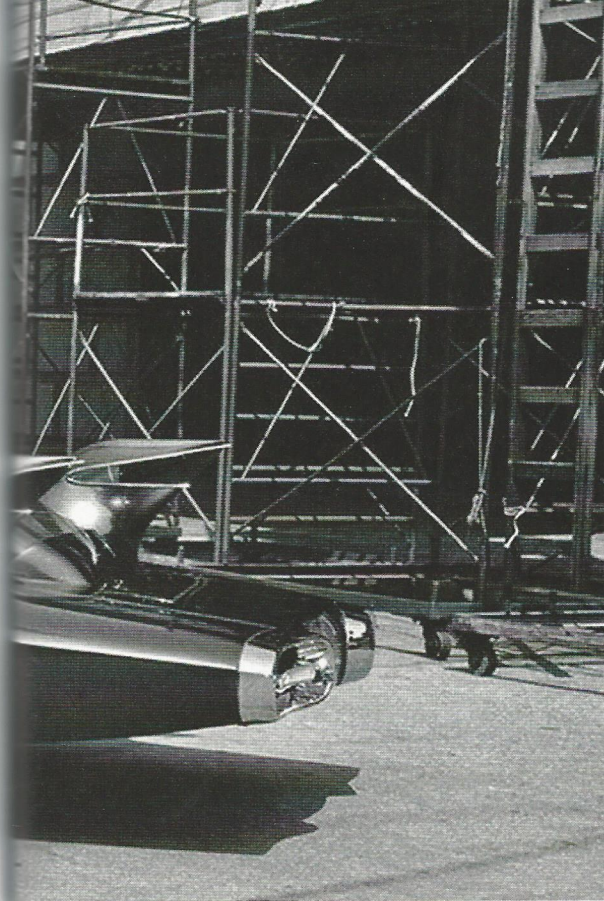
The auto business was simpler then. Safety regulations were virtually nonexistent. Bumpers just bumped. Steering columns were lethal spears waiting to impale a hapless driver in a collision. Emissions controls were years in the future. Crash-testing new models was unheard of, and 25-cent gasoline didn't dictate restrictions on engine sizes. Most cars were still body-on-frame construction, which meant a one-off dream car could be readily fabricated.

The cutting edge

There was a predictable sameness about many new model cars as the '50s ended and the '60s began. Into this vacuum charged a number of creative geniuses — some from the industry, others as consultants, and a few as hot-rodders and customizers. In one case, it was to save a flagging company. Others were motivated by the



Virgil Exner (left) with the Chrysler K-310



desire to win on the custom-car-show circuit or even build a car for a Hollywood film. One designer, whose work with Italian collaborators was especially cutting edge, wanted to augment bygone legendary marques with new, futuristic coachwork.

Each of the cars in this exciting Pebble Beach class is largely the work of a single talented designer. No two "Dream Cars" are remotely alike — all of them are very

creative interpretations showing just what could be done with individual concept cars in the free-wheeling 1960s.

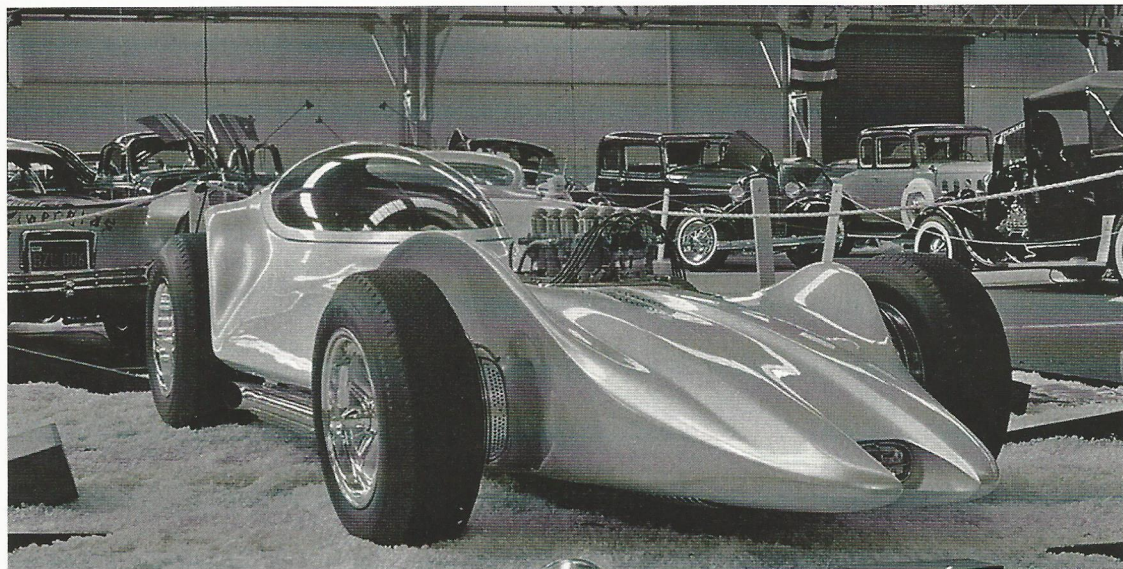
The "Dream Cars of the 1960s" Class showcases the work of well-known Detroit designers such as Virgil Exner, Alex Tremulis and Paul Farago (and his Italian partner Sergio Coggiola); industrial designer Brooks Stevens; skilled engineer Herb Adams; talented amateurs Andy DiDia and Richard Bosley; and creative customizers Dean Jeffries and Gene Winfield. They all had one thing in common: They weren't afraid to push the envelope.

Dreams become reality

The DiDia 150 is just as shocking today as it was when Hollywood crooner/actor Bobby Darin and his wife, Sandra Dee, rolled up at the Academy Awards in it in 1961. Andy DiDia conceived this creation in 1953, with Chrysler designer Edward Francoise, and it took seven years to complete. The DiDia's finish, reportedly done by George Barris' shop, consisted of 30 coats of Swedish Pearl Essence, spiced with crushed diamonds.

Brooks Stevens' designs ranged from civilianized Jeeps to the low-slung Excalibur. By 1962, despite the efforts of design consultant Raymond Loewy with the Avanti, Studebaker's sales had stalled. Stevens, (who'd freshened the Studebaker Hawk) penned the radical Studebaker Sceptre. Built by Carrozzeria Sibona-Basano of Turin, it has a full-width Sylvania headlamp assembly designed to minimize glare to ongoing traffic. Lacking funds to launch the Sceptre, Studebaker folded, and Stevens kept the prototype.

Pinstriper, painter, skilled fabricator and Hollywood stuntman Dean Jeffries could do it all. He was part of the team that produced the first Cobra. Dean built the Mantaray for the 1964 Grand National Roadster Show in Oakland, CA. Its chassis came from a pre-war Maserati GP car. Jeffries built a tubular steel framework, welded pieces of sheet aluminum to form the body, then created his first bubbletop by blowing air into a mold of molten plastic. The asymmetrical Mantaray is powered by a



1964 Mantaray

MONTEREY / Dream Cars of the 1960s



1966 Bosley Mk II "Interstate"

289-ci Ford V8 that Carroll Shelby gave Dean.

LeRoi "Tex" Smith took an unconventional approach to win the Oakland Roadster Show with the radical XR6 in 1963, backed by an all-star cast. Steve Swaja designed it; George Barris and Gene Winfield built it, and Tony Nancy did the trimming. The XR6 was loosely based on a 1927 Ford Model T, powered by a full-race Dodge Lancer slant six with three side-draft Weber carburetors. A tubular chassis, independent VW front suspension, a Dodge Dart rear, asymmetrical styling, and hidden headlights are a few highlights.

An Oakland Roadster Show Tournament of Fame Award winner, the "Reactor," by custom-car legend Gene Winfield, was commissioned, designed and built for Joe Kizis' 15th Annual Hartford Autorama. It has a hand-built aluminum body, welded to a tubular steel frame and mounted on a Citroën DS front-wheel-drive chassis, and it's powered by turbocharged flat six from a Chevrolet Corvair Monza. Initially called the "Autorama Special," it was bought back by Winfield, who renamed it "The Reactor."

Pontiac engineer Herb Adams' 1965 Vivant roadster was inspired by Carrozzeria Bertone's Franco Scaglione-designed Alfa Romeo B.A.T. prototype coupes. Adams designed the Vivant's space-frame chassis. Its sleek body was built by three European panel-beaters. Pontiac design cues were baked in, and the engine was a special 370-ci Pontiac V8 that Adams initiated for a Pontiac development program.

With "Le Patron" Ettore Bugatti and his son Jean both deceased, Pierre Marco tried to resurrect La Marque in 1951 with an improved Type 57 chassis as the basis for the new Type 101. Chassis 101106, the last one built, and with a supercharged straight-eight, was bodied by Carrozzeria Ghia to a Virgil Exner design. It was exhibited at the 1965 Turin Motor Show, but no orders ensued.

Exner later produced several "revival" body designs for a re-appearance of Duesenberg, Stutz and Mercer. Only the Stutz went into limited production.

Richard Bosley traded his first special for a racing Corvette ex-Sebring SR-2 chassis which he used for his 1966 Bosley Mk II "Interstate," named for the new highway system. He built a monocoque fiberglass body, and installed a 345-hp, Tri-Power Pontiac V8. The Interstate Mk II received considerable press coverage, and it was invited to the Henry Ford Museum for the 1967 Annual Sports Car Review. Lost until the early 1990s, it's been completely restored.

In 1967, California-based Gyro Transport Systems retained Tucker designer Alex Tremulis to design a prototype two-wheeled car that became known as the Gyro-X. Powered by a transversely mounted Mini 4-cylinder, it had a hydraulically-driven gyroscope developed by Thomas O. Summers. Troutman and Barnes built the only running example. The Lane Motor Museum in Nashville, TN, acquired the Gyro-X in 2012. Restored with the help of Italian gyroscope experts, the Gyro-X is operable for the first time in decades.

The Farago CF 428 was a design exercise by Paul Farago and Sergio Coggiola, who worked at Carrozzeria Ghia in Torino, Italy, with Virgil Exner, Head of design for Chrysler. They developed most of the Chrysler/Ghia concept cars of the '50s and '60s. After a stint with Dual-Ghia, Farago and Coggiola established Carrozzeria Coggiola in Torino. Their first project, the Farago CF428, was built for Pontiac GM John DeLorean, who wanted "an attention getter" concept car with a Pontiac drivetrain. Farago later joined Virgil Exner as Chief Engineer of the Duesenberg II revival, which led to the Stutz Blackhawk, both using Pontiac components.

Don't miss the 1960s "Dream Cars" at Pebble — you'll not see their like again. ■