

Comedian Jay Leno joked, "A mere millionaire can compete with a billionaire – and win." And on Sunday morning, as dawn breaks, almost 200 cars start filtering out onto the hallowed fairway of the eponymous golf course, each more exquisite than the other. Those who took Motor Mechanics will remember the elbow grease we put into polishing the Junko. Competitors at this concours take it to another level. They polish every spoke of their wire wheels, every vent of their drum brakes, and the engine compartments gleam as though they were made of marble and glass. There is not one drop of grease or oil to be seen anywhere. At this level of competition, no one takes any chances with shoddy work.

Each year, a few cars, makes or models are highlighted and celebrated as part of that concours' theme. This year, the Maserati Centennial, American marque Ruxton, the Ferrari 250 Testa Rossa, coachbuilders Fernandez et Darrin, early steam cars and the 1914 French Grand Prix, amongst others, were brought into focus. One of the fantastic things about such a format is that you get quite a mix of cars on show and can get up-close and personal with a collection of cars that few museums could match. Many of the models shown are from luxury manufacturers that did not survive the Great Depression of the 1930s. There are examples that show the height of opulence (a pair of his and hers Hispano-Suiza cars built by American designer Howard 'Dutch' Darrin for the Rothschilds) and on others we see ingenuity – like a hand-pumping system on the 1914 Grand Prix cars. As these cars had no mechanical or electric fuel pump, the attending mechanic had to pressurise the fuel tank with a hand pump while riding it. He also had to keep topping up on engine oil, all while the car was being raced! And remember, there were no seatbelts or helmets at this time either!

While the field comprised some truly beautiful cars, a few caught my attention and in no particular order they are – a 1952 Jaguar XK120 bubble-top car that Norman Dewis used to break the production car speed record (hitting 277.47 kmph in 1953); a 1939 Talbot-Lago T150C-SS Pourtout Coupé, with a teardrop shaped body; the Czech-built Tatra



**1957 FERRARI 250 TESTA ROSSA**

