

# detour

( DESTINATIONS, DIVERSIONS & RECREATION )

The Tour d'Elegance route  
included a stretch along  
the ocean



PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF PEBBLE BEACH CONCOURS D'ELEGANCE

## An Automotive Affair

My husband's first car, a 1937 Dodge sedan, cost \$8.57. He bought it with his three brothers — only one of whom was old enough to have a driver's license. It was the beginning of a lifelong love for everything automotive. "The boys" went on to own a 1940 Ford Woody and other cars priced within the range of their pooled allowance money. In 1960, dad got into the act and bought a Type 57 Bugatti — and all of their lives were forever changed. The "car boys" became "car guys" and passionate Bugattistes. Together, the family made annual pilgrimages to the Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance, the Holy Grail of auto events. >>



This year, 248 elegant automobiles assembled in Pebble Beach — 48 came from outside the United States



« Since its start in 1950, the Concours has become a weeklong automotive affair that includes the Tour d'Elegance, several “secondary” concours, seminars on collector car topics, Automotive Fine Art Society exhibitions, vintage racing at Laguna Seca, multiple classic car auctions (\$500,000,000 worth of cars changed hands this year), and, of course, nonstop car guy camaraderie.

Ten years ago, my husband Rick had the honor of being invited to enter the Type 57 in the Concours and was thrilled to come home with a third place trophy. However, his favorite family Bug — a Type 46 Petite Royale — was an enigma. The chassis was restored,

but the Gaston Grummer body remained damaged and altered by previous owners.

“I’d love to restore the Type 46 to its original livery and take it to Pebble,” he told me, “but I’m not sure what that looks like. If I do something, it has to be *pur sang*.” (That’s Bugatti-speak for “pure blooded,” meaning historically accurate.)

Rick’s big break came in February 2011 when he traveled to Retromobile, a huge auto exposition in Paris, with car buddy and fellow La Jollan Tom Olson. While looking for parts, contacts, and information relative to the Type 46, they

struck gold with an introduction to the coach builder’s son Philippe Grummer. For the first time, Rick saw pictures of the original body and — *piece de resistance* — photos of the car at the 1930 Paris Auto Show where it won Best of Show. ([en.retromobile.com](http://en.retromobile.com))

Over the next two and a half years, with the help of The Alan Taylor Company in Escondido, Rick painstakingly restored the car to its original state. The headlights, bumpers, and fenders had been altered — and where do you find the correct Marchal lights? Not at Napa Auto Parts — but through car guy connections in the Netherlands. The *pur sang* bud vases? (Yes, this elegant car has mounted bud vases.) He found them at an automotive museum in Florida. Hides for new upholstery? Those came from Swiss cows in Southern Germany where — unlike the U.S. — they aren’t subject to damage by barbed wire. Matching the original paint color? None of this was easy, but it was an exciting adventure.

The actual Concours d'Elegance was Sunday, August 18, but we moved into the house we’d rented in Pacific Grove on August 12 so we could attend some of the Pebble Beach Automotive Week events leading up to the big day. Brother John and car friend Tom were there with spouses, as was daughter Jennifer and her family.

([www.sanctuaryvacationrentals.com](http://www.sanctuaryvacationrentals.com), [www.pebblebeachconcours.net](http://www.pebblebeachconcours.net))

The Concours d'Elegance takes place on the 18th fairway of the Pebble Beach Golf Course on the 3rd Sunday in August





One of my favorite events was the Gooding & Company seminar on classic car collecting, moderated by Keith Martin, editor and publisher of *Sports Car Market* and emcee of the La Jolla Concours d'Elegance.

I also really enjoyed the The Quail, A Motorsports Gathering at Quail Lodge Golf Club in Carmel (the hardest to get and most expensive ticket of the week). This concours feels more like a garden party than a car show and I welcomed the relaxed atmosphere. While Rick was ogling automotive pulchritude, I had fun picking out the British men with their posh accents and salmon colored pants and the Euro chic guys who looked like GQ models.

([signatureevents.peninsula.com/en/motorsports/motorsports.html](http://signatureevents.peninsula.com/en/motorsports/motorsports.html))

The Tour d'Elegance on Thursday might have been fun if T-46 hadn't been temperamental. At several points along the scenic 60-plus-mile route, the car stopped and challenged the Bugatti brothers and Alan Taylor's crew to problem-solve in situ. This was no small matter, since entrants who complete



The T-46 Petit Royale, a classic French car, exhibited a bit of temper on the Tour

the tour earn bonus points from the Concours judges. A quick fix enabled us to finish, but the next day was spent sleuthing a permanent solution. This meant we couldn't go to the Rolex Monterey Motorsports Reunion at Laguna Seca where our neighbor Kaid Marouf was racing.

On Sunday, Jay Leno was in his usual spot greeting the drivers as they maneuvered their cars onto the 18th fairway in front of The Lodge at Pebble Beach. As usual, it was overcast and, as usual, I was nervous. I couldn't even watch as the judges examined every nook and cranny of the car. "Winning

isn't everything," I kept telling myself as I paced around for the rest of the day, but when I looked at Rick I saw that middle school kid who really loves cars — especially this car.

And then the awards were announced — and we all cheered because T-46 won First in Class. On the way to the winners' circle I remembered why that Dodge sedan cost \$8.57. The boys had actually paid \$10, but they found a bunch of change under the back seat, which reduced the net cost significantly. They were really happy that day, but today was even better.

ELIZABETH HANSEN



A 1934 Packard 1108 Twelve Dietrich Convertible Victoria won Best of Show at the 2013 Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance