



This year's International Jaguar Festival (IJF) was held at The Savoy Automobile Museum in Cartersville, about 40 miles north of Atlanta and I was there. Organised jointly by the Atlanta Jaguar Society and the North Georgia Jaguar Club, they couldn't have found a more perfect location. The USA is obviously huge compared to the UK and Georgia as a single State is bigger than England and Wales combined.

The IJF is our American Jaguar-owning cousins' equivalent of JDC's National Weekend but held over three days rather than our two. The event moves around the regions, being organised by the local clubs but under the aegis of Jaguar Clubs of North America (JCNA).

Day one is for their tour, while day two features the concours and day three is normally a slalom. They set two tours, an easy scenic run around the countryside (with only right turns for safety), and a TSD - Time Speed and Distance - tour which is more akin to a competitive rally.

SPACE TO DISPLAY

On arrival at The Savoy - a new museum, built less than five years ago on a 37-acre farmland site on the edge of Cartersville - you are greeted by a striking, five-ton stainless-steel sculpture by Dublin-born

Linda Brunker, which mimics an Art Deco bonnet ornament with hints, I think, of Armstrong Siddeley about it.

Having arrived early to spend some time with the JCNA President, we were privileged to be given a personal tour of the museum. It has five main galleries, one of which houses cars from Savoy's permanent collection, while the other four have displays that change regularly. Each display lasts for four months and they change one of them each month. Having worked for the JDHT, I know what's involved in finding, borrowing and moving vehicles, so changing one display every month is a huge task. One of the new displays was titled *Roar of the Jaguar* to tie in with the IJF.

The Jaguar gallery included: a 1950 XK120 that had raced at Palm Springs; a fully restored 1955 D-Type that has been shown at Pebble Beach; a 1963 Lightweight E-Type in which Nicholas Cage used to perfect his high-speed driving skills for the film *Gone in 60 Seconds*; and a 2009 XKR GT2 race car that was campaigned in the 2010 and 2011 ALMS racing seasons.

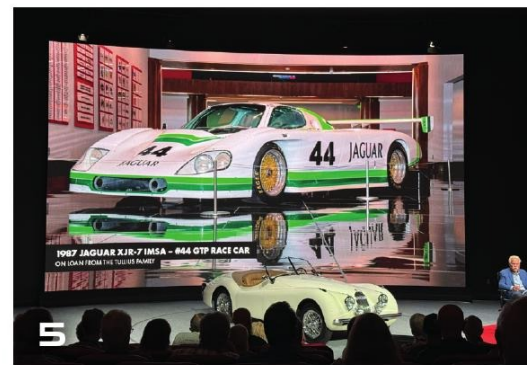
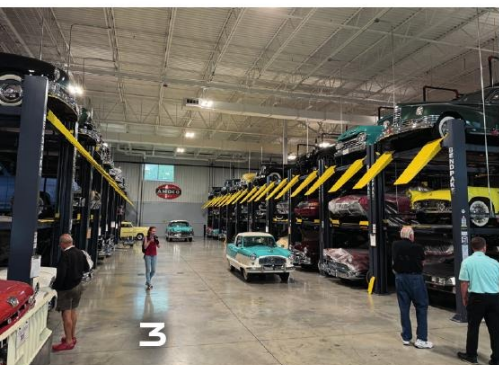
Being such a large site, the museum, it is blessed with its own storage building. This was, in fact, the first thing they built and is, essentially, a rectangular box-like warehouse - the locals thought they were getting a Costco! Those of you who



have visited JLR Classic Works at Ryton will be familiar with the serried ranks of ramps storing cars, only at Savoy they are three cars high instead of two.

All JDC Areas and members are familiar with concours at one level or another and the JCNA takes this very seriously, with ring-binders full of rules for each group. Most of the concours entrants didn't partake of the Friday tour and instead stayed behind to clean their cars in the hotel car park (sounds familiar).

The Savoy has a state-of-the-art auditorium, accommodating 300 people in modern cinema-style seating, where they stage regular film nights - great for a community which doesn't have a commercial cinema - although being part of the museum, drinks and popcorn are not allowed. The auditorium is also



JAGUARS GO



1 Savoy Building with Dublin-born Linda Bruncker's magnificent stainless-steel bonnet mascot sculpture to the left 2 The sign for Gallery B, where the Roar of the Jaguar exhibition was staged 3 An Alladin's cave of glorious cars, stacked high... plus a cute little Nash Metropolitan on its way out 4 Tireside Chat slide show... 5 ...and larger-than-life 1987 XJR7, on loan to the museum from Bob Tullius' family, on the auditorium screen 6 Concours cars, ranging from a Series 2 E-Type at right to an F-Type far left, await judgement 7 2009 XKR GT2 as part of the Roar of the Jaguar gallery 8 Judges' briefing for the concours 9 A supercharged Jaguar V8 shoehorned into an E-Type engine bay 10 The Banana E-Type needs little introduction!



were 57 cars entered for the concours, with a team of 14 judges split across the classes. I spoke to a number of the owners about their cars: a 1935 SS1, found in Argentina and brought to the USA for restoration; a LHD E-Type (chassis 006), complete with its own archive; and a very yellow E-Type, registration plate BNANNA. This not only had yellow paintwork and yellow engine ancillaries, but the owner – who had painted his bike yellow when he was eight years old – sat on a yellow chair and wore a yellow shirt, making him look somewhat *minionesque*.

used for a regular series of Tireside Chats (check *Savoy Tireside Chat* on YouTube) and one of these was organised for the Friday night under the title *Grace, Space and Pace: The Enduring Appeal of Jaguar Cars*. The illustrious panel consisted of: Ken Gross, Director of the Petersen Museum in Los Angeles, as moderator; TV personality, car restorer, journalist and author Wayne Carini; and Kim McCullough, currently Chief Marketing Officer for Parella Motorsport but former employee of Mazda, Nissan, Toyota and JLR.

They presented a fascinating summary on the racing Jaguars that were on display, on the cars' racing histories and the current state of the classic car market. They finished by asking the audience what we all thought of Jaguar's advertising campaign and Type 00. This prompted a lively, indeed heated, debate and at one point I had to interject with some accurate information, courtesy of recent briefings from Ken McConomy,

JLR's Head of Global PR. This finished with a vote asking members of the audience whether they liked the car: two said their 40-something-aged children would probably be customers; and two others (including me) said they liked it... out of an audience of around 150 people.

CONCOURS

Saturday morning dawned and the concours contestants set off early for the mile-and-a-half drive to the Savoy, each parking in their allocated, numbered slot on the grass. For ease of judging, the cars were lined up in class order – XK120-150, E-Type, saloons, etc. The rest of us finished breakfast at a more leisurely pace then followed them over, with us mere mortals parking towards the rear of the display field.

Champion Class was assembled at the front, with Driven (akin to this year's Riwx Trophy category) behind and the Modified Class behind them. In total, there



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Two modified cars particularly took my fancy: an F-Type with all the interior panels replaced by Ford Red Carbon Fiber (Google it) and an E-Type with a supercharged Jaguar V8 shoehorned into a modified engine spaceframe.

The judges, in matching shirts and hats, started their inspections after 'rags down' at 11:30 and the results were collated and tabulated after lunch, with the awards presented in the Savoy auditorium after dinner. For some reason, Champion cars are scored out of 100 while Drivens and Modifieds are out of 10. The two highest Champion cars scored 99.98 and 99.97 respectively and two of the Drivens scored a perfect 10. I lost count of the number of awards, but I got the impression that very few left empty-handed. The pre-war class was won by the 1935 SS1 (the only pre-war car there) but it went on to win the Judges' Choice and Overall Winner Trophy - which came in its own wooden crate.

I have attended two previous IJFs - in Texas in 2021 and South Carolina in



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11 F-Type with bespoke Ford Red Carbon Fiber trim **12** Definitely in the 'Driven' class, this E-Type wears its travel badges with pride **13** Tony Merrygold (left) chats to K. McCullough and JCNA President Mark Mayuga **14** Best in Show Award goes to the 1935 SS1, which also received Best in Class and Judges' Choice Awards **15** Programme for this year's IJF and Tony Merrygold's VIP pass!

2023 - and for me the highlight is the slalom. This requires a large patch of tarmac on which a figure-of-eight course is laid out with cones. The entrants are allowed three attempts of three laps each, all timed, with the fastest time of the day winning a trophy. What I liked most in both Texas and SC, was that cars that competed in the concours on the Saturday were driven round the slalom on the Sunday, as if they had been stolen. Sadly, this year the slalom didn't happen.

While planning the event, the organisers had found a suitable patch of tarmac just a few miles from the hotel and permissions were agreed. However, about a month before the IJF, the area was turned into a construction site and a slalom around diggers and JCBs would not have met the JCNA rules nor been safe. The best-laid plans and all that...

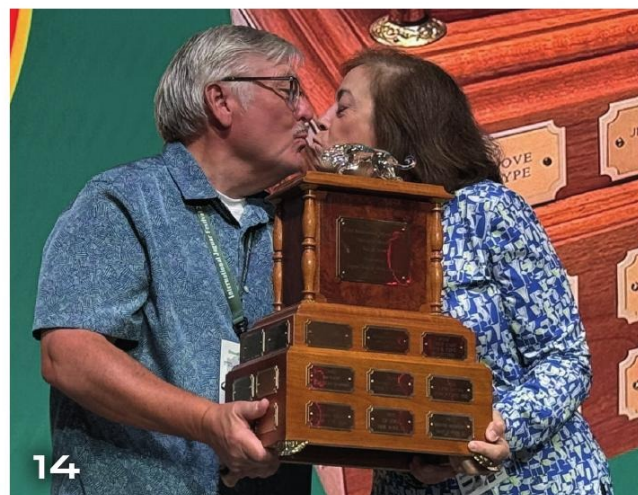


The date for the next IJF has been announced but, sadly, although I will be in the States, I will be driving Route 66, so I won't be able to attend.

Tony Merrygold



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