

**ANTIQUE AUTOMOBILE CLUB SOCIAL REGION
VISITS
GENERAL WILLIAM LYON'S PRIVATE AUTOMOBILE COLLECTION**

April 27, 2022

The General William Lyon collection of world class automobiles began with the great American classics that General Lyon recalled from his youth. Growing up in the 1930's, he was consumed with a love for automobiles, especially luxury coach-built cars – Packards and Duesenbergs and Cords. At 16 he bought his first car, albeit a dilapidated old Ford Model T. Story has it, ironically, five decades later he taught his son Bill to drive in a 1929 Ford Model a roadster pickup truck.

Through the father and son appreciation for automobiles the collection has evolved to include Bill's interest in postwar sports cars and race cars. Today this assemblage of automobiles consists of almost 100 automobiles spanning various genres.



Even though the trek to this Orange County Estate was fraught with traffic and GPS hindrances, it was well beyond expectations and immensely appreciation by all that attended.



Before arriving at the Lyon Estate, one must be allowed entrance through the guard gate. This is just the precursor of what to expect further up the road. The aroma of orange blossoms intensifies your senses as you get your first glimpse of the Estate. Set high atop the ridge is the stately Colonial home reached by a meandering roadway passing over a glimmering lake.



Winding around the home you're immediately faced with the massive car museum. Originally built as a 14,000 square-foot car museum in the same traditional Colonial style as the house, this structure was expanded in 2002 by adding 10,000 square feet and turning the new wing into an Art Deco style showroom for the General's and Bill's favorite prewar classics.



Center stage in the Art Deco style showroom is this beautiful 1931 Duesenberg Model J Weyman, "Taper Tail" Speedster. Identified by its rakish "V" windshield, pontoon fenders, single-person rumble seat and tapered tail.



The General was a big-game hunter known for taking his family on month long safaris to hunt for specific animals. Of course, the lion holds court among the collection.



Lyons...and tigers...but alas, no bears



Club President Howard Green & Secretary Betty Green



Chief Mechanic Robin Miller
With Duane Hinkle





Bob & Miriam



Bob's busy admiring the cars



Sue & Michael



1935 Duesenberg J Gurney Nutting Speedster built for Maharaja of Indore in London. Take note of the red and blue lights on the fender—these were used to indicate who was driving so the correct servants would be at their ready.



Doug & Becky



Robert & Roberta



and more...



The Chauffeur's seat was always covered in leather to withstand any weather conditions while the passenger compartment was fabric upholstered sometimes containing needlepoint designs. The car on the left places the driver exposed to the elements; but the right driver is protected with the snap on top.



It was a Bugatti Type 35B similar to this one that in 1929 won the first Monaco Grand Prix



Joe, Elaine & Jerry



Joel & Cathy



The only 1939 Mercedes Benz 770K Gabriel
In the world as well as the largest ever made.



1937 Cord 812 SC Sportsman



Sam & Linda



Joel welcoming everyone and introducing
the estate manager Gary Haddy



David & Sandy



Howard explaining to Al the special features of the transmission



Glen is in awe of this Bugatti Type 10, the first production
vehicle to bear the Bugatti name and survives as the only
Type 10 ever built. Ettore Bugatti hand crafted the car himself
in the basement of his home during the winter of 1908-1909.



It's OK, Robin posed Diana in this beautiful Isotto Fraschini, a 1930 convertible tourer by Castagna of Milano.



The Model A Town Car was offered as a prestigious model that was smaller and more maneuverable for parking in the city. With a limited demand, only 1098 were produced in 1929-1930. Today there are only 30 known survivors.



1947 Chrysler Town & Country Sedan – During World War II and for a brief period that followed, real whitewall tires were scarce, so white “beauty” rings over black walls were often utilized to simulate the desired look. Another interesting feature solves an inconvenient problem. The windshield visor made it difficult to see a traffic signal when first in line at an intersection. A prism on an arm the driver could adjust made it possible to see the light change.



Asked if the cars ever leave the showroom. Robin answered a resounding “Yes”. It is his pleasure and job to take each car on a 10 -15 mile run each month (and clean them upon returning). As General Lyon told a Times reporter in 1987 “These cars originally were made to be driven, so I put them to their intended purpose. If I couldn’t drive a car, I wouldn’t want it.”

This wonderful opportunity to view the collection of magnificent automobiles compiled by General William Lyon and Bill Lyon couldn’t have been accomplished without the help of the Lyon management team. The Antique Automobile Club of America, Southern California Region expresses an enormous thank you to Robin and Gary and everyone else connected with the Lyon Estate for opening the museum for us and being such gracious hosts making this a memorable day we will not forget.