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More than 80 antique cars & trucks were at the Ladew Show



By Jerry Gordon
Photos by Buzz Diehl, Dave Rodal & Juliet Schneider

Remember the opening line of a famous Sunday night TV show of the 1960s – “We have a really big show for you”? Ed Sullivan, and that era of TV, is long gone, but in the antique car hobby, it’s a really big show when more than eighty antique vehicles come out for no other reason than it’s a nice day for a Sunday drive in the country.

At the Ladew Topiary Gardens Antique Car Show on August 23rd, there was only one trophy to be awarded. The primary attraction, besides all the nice cars and trucks, was the wonderful grounds of Ladew Topiary Gardens – well, there was great weather after the region had on and off rain for several days.

Ladew’s staff reserved the circle in front of the mansion and the meadow leading to the

mansion. By 1:30 PM the space in the front meadow was full and they had to park show cars on the road behind the entrance, which was the first time ever that we filled the front meadow. Ladew’s staff reported that the attendance by the general public was much higher than usual at our shows. This increase in activity made for a very festive afternoon with large crowds walking around enjoying the vehicles.

The mix of cars was very interesting because we had a significant number of foreign sports cars (more than twenty) that came to the show. We saw fine examples of Jaguar, Triumph, Austin Healy, MG, Porsche, Ferrari, and Mercedes Benz. In addition, there were quite a few Corvettes and some Thunderbirds.

Both the gardens and the Manor House (c. 1747) located on this 250 acre site are on the National Register of Historic Places. The gardens are on 22 acres and include

More than one-hundred well-maintained topiary forms, which are the centerpieces in the twenty-seven themed gardens, among them – Victorian, Water Lily, Tivoli House, Keyhole, Rose, and Temple of Venus, to name a few.

Then there’s the world famous hunt scene in the meadow leading up to the mansion. It’s a hunter on a horse that is jumping a fence behind the hounds, who are chasing a fox – all of which are wonderful topiary forms. While Ladew is in the rural area of Monkton, this unique site attracts many visitors throughout the year – and was certainly an attraction for the car show.

Members and friends in the hobby who brought an antique vehicle to the show were given two passes to Ladew’s exhibits, which entitled them to walk the garden displays and to take one of the guided tours of the Manor House mansion. Between

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Ladew Topiary Gardens – continued
looking at the great variety in the car show and enjoying the gardens, everyone was kept busy all afternoon.

One of the Club members who has been bringing his car to the Ladew show for several years is Ben Gugliuzza. His 1955 Chevrolet Delray 210 two-door club sedan won the Sponsor's Choice trophy in 2007.

The first time Ben saw the car was at an estate sale in Catonsville. It had been owned by an elderly lady, with only 24K miles on the odometer. It was in less than pristine condition with the back window broken out and some body panel damage. But Ben had always wanted a '55 Chevrolet and saw great possibilities in the car.



Angie & Ben Gugliuzza's 1955 Chevrolet Delray Club Sedan

Ben approached the guy who bought the car, but he wasn't interested in selling it. Ben kept tabs on the car, which apparently was little used, and fifteen years later in 1993 he finally convinced the owner to part with the Chevy Delray. He did some upgrades and freshened the paint.

In the 1955 Chevrolet model lineup, the 210 mid-range trim cars were almost as popular as the Bel Air models – selling over 800K at prices ranging from \$1,775 to \$2,127.

Margery and George Hubbard came to the Ladew show in their 1959 Mercedes Benz 190SL. It's a light metallic green with a tan leather interior and looks to be nicely restored. At the show George expressed interest in joining our Club and we were able to sign him up on the spot.

Back in 1960, George had fallen in love

with the Mercedes 190SL roadsters and wanted to have one. He saw several that were acceptable, and put a deposit on one, but it didn't work out.

Then he finally acquired his 1959 190SL, which was an every day driver until 1963 when the transmission failed. The car was retired and put in storage. The thinking may have been that some day it would be fixed and put back on the road. Well, thirty-five years went by before George finally got the urge to fix up his beloved Mercedes. The storage conditions had been bad for a car – a dirt floor barn – so there was a lot of body rot. The car had also been moved from New York to Maryland. It looked like a very challenging restoration, but George was determined



Margery and George Hubbard's 1959 Mercedes Benz 190SL

to get the 190SL back to its original beauty.

It took George five years to restore the 190SL. He did all the work himself – body and frame, mechanical and electrical, interior and top, and paint. To help the project along he acquired a spare engine on eBay for \$700 and it worked. This was installed in the car until he completed the original engine. He then put the car together with all its matching number components.

At the end of the day, the last Club members were preparing to leave when one unnoticed car that had been parked on the back gravel road came up the main road before leaving. As we stood there talking to the driver, we realized that this show had brought together a fantastic range of automotive history – '30s and '40s classic cars, foreign and domestic sports cars, American muscle,

exotic cars – including two Ferraris, and now finally right in front of us was this amazing little car, which running at idle was quivering. It was a 1966 Trabant, owned by Mike Annen. Trabants were made in East Germany and also sold in Communist Eastern Europe. The Trabant was no frills transportation with a two-cycle engine. During the '60s and '70s, there was a multi-year wait to get delivery on one.

The Sponsors Choice Trophy was selected by Ladew Gardens' Branden Armis, who spent a lot of time looking over all the cars on both roads. He decided that Bud Currey's 1965 Pontiac was worthy of this award. Bud was surprised, but grateful to have one of his Poniiacs chosen.



Sponsor's Choice winner – Bud Currey's 1965 Pontiac

Club members who registered were: Joan & Walt Meyers, Richard Hiob, Rick & John Gambo, Elsie & Norm Reese, Mary & Ed Allen, Bill Weisand, Ginny & Paul Habicht, Tommy Thompson, Nick & Tim Canova, Terry & Dan Materazzi, Michael & David Dodge, Jennifer & Warren Dodge + Ruth Synodinos, Todd, Andrew & Gary Wilmer, Tracey & Bruce Knott, Lynn & John Horn, Carrie & Dave Benson, Bud Currey, Franklin Gage, Rose & Paul Smith, Henry Ver Valen, Ben Gugliuzza, Margaret & Francis Werneth, Eric Hanson, Lynn & Billy McKee, Alan Sandler, Margery & George Hubbard, Karen & Rich Berger, Rory Macleod, Buzz Diehl, Pat & Ed Butler, Jeanette & TW Scott, Linda & Richard Klingmeyer, Read Van Zile & Joanne Day, Bob Lenio, Jack O'Hara, Lois & John Krupinsky, Ted Schneider.

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Wandering Through Ladew Topiary Gardens - a visual tour of gardens and cars



A nice feature of Ladew Topiary Gardens is the self-guided walking tours that can be taken in several directions from the Manor House. These paths lead into many themed gardens with lots of topiary forms and statues. The diversity of the gardens keeps many of us coming back year after year. And walking through these gardens is worthwhile no matter what the weather is like. In wet weather, you can feel the plants enjoying the rain. Some of the cars on the meadow shown here from the top left to bottom: Read Van Zile & Joanne Day, 1959 Corvette; Carrie & Dave Benson, 1947 Lincoln; Rose & Paul Smith, 1964 Thunderbird; Franklin Gage, 1959 Buick; Mike Annen, 1966 Trabant; and Rory Macleod, 1966 Buick.