

Fine tuned

Access the motoring world's finest cars in your lunch break as London's automotive garden party returns to the City

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In 1879, the launch of Carl Benz's Patent Motor Car No 1 signalled the birth of the automobile, with a one-cylinder stationary gasoline engine powering three large penny-farthing-style wheels. Since then the motoring industry has exploded into a hive of technical innovation and engineering progress.

Today's vehicles have evolved from Benz's pioneering model, which made way for private long-distance travel, into innovative racers, pieces of art, modification projects for enthusiasts, luxury status symbols and eco-led electric and automated designs.

Encapsulating the essence of the transformative automobile world is the annual London Concours car show presented by Swiss luxury watchmaker Breguet. Billed as an 'automotive garden party in the heart of the City', the event, to be held on 5 and 6 June, will see 80 of the world's finest cars, old and new, gathered together on the lawns of the Honourable Artillery Company, alongside delectable food and retail chalets including

a pop-up Montres Breguet boutique on the lawns, showcasing a selection of its latest pieces.

Five acres of green lawns play host to an impressive vehicle display, arranged into specially curated themes covering every facet of car culture, from 'The Icons' such as the classic Aston Martin DB5, or the McLaren F1 and 'Lost Marques', paying homage to some of the greatest car manufacturers lost to the sands of time (such as Alvis, Panhard, Frazer Nash and Bizzarrini), to 'The Innovators' bringing together some of the most advanced cars ever made, such as the Bugatti EB110 – the first road car to use carbon fibre monocoque.

Vintage enthusiasts will delight in collector Julian Balme's envy-inducing troupe of cars, including a 1954 Lincoln Cosmopolitan in baby blue – the perfect example of classic Americana. While those looking for something a little more left-field should head over to the display of 'The Outlaws'. Once a shunned practice, outlaw vehicles – a name given to Porsche enthusiasts whose modifications were deemed sacrilegious

by the purists – have become a recent global phenomenon, and here you will find a collection of vehicles, including a de-chromed Porsche 356 and a chopped-roof Lancia Aurelia, whose performance and aesthetic alterations are now a cause for celebration in the motoring world.

One of the biggest pulls of the London Concours for City folk is its location. Just a few minutes' walk from Liverpool Street and Moorgate stations in City Road, it's a hidden green idyll away from the hustle and bustle of the surrounding city, and close enough for a lunchtime visit.

The 300-cover on-site restaurant in collaboration with chef Mark Hix, known as HIX – London Concours, has plenty of bookable dining options, from a preview breakfast, to lunch and afternoon tea as well as a drinks party in the garden. It's a good place to combine a love of motoring with a business meeting. And it's not often you can experience the stars of the motoring world in your lunch break. ●

The London Concours 5-6 June; londonconcours.co.uk/tickets; breguet