

INDUSTRY NEWS

Custom Medallions A Fitting Memento for Entrants of the Amelia Island Concours

It takes a tremendous amount of effort from countless volunteers, sponsors, and staff—as well as entrants and supporters—to make the Amelia Island (GA) Concours d'Elegance the premier vintage automotive show that it is. Dedicated enthusiasts have been supporting the show for the entire 15 years that it has been in existence, logging hundreds, if not thousands, of hours along the way. When it comes time to recognize these people so vital to the success of the endeavor, they deserve more than a trinket. As a token of appreciation, Amelia Founder Bill Warner had custom medallions minted for each entrant—memorable keepsakes with a stature similar to the event itself.



▲ Dedicated enthusiasts have been supporting the Amelia Island (GA) Concours d'Elegance vintage automotive show for 15 years. As a token of appreciation, show founder Bill Warner had custom medallions from the Osborne Coinage Company minted for each entrant.

Unlike a trophy or ribbon, which can appear similar to other items in the trophy case, the custom medallions are unique. The hefty three-inch medals feature the Concours logo and show date on the front, and "15th Anniversary" on the back with a pair of crossed checkered flags above the names of each honoree since the program began. The coins are thick enough so that the details of the logo and graphics appear in deep relief, giving the medallions a 3-D effect that adds to their uniqueness. A glance is enough to understand why these are such treasured mementos.

15-Year Tradition

There are many reasons why this annual event draws 250 cars from seven countries, as well as 15,000 spectators in 2009 alone. Since its founding in 1996, the Concours Foundation has been donating a portion of the proceeds to worthwhile local charities, including more than \$1.6 million to Community Hospice of Northeast Florida, Inc., with additional support to Spina Bifida of Jacksonville, and other deserving groups.

Another tradition has been to single out a racing personality for special recognition. "One of the unique things about our show is that we honor a racing personality each year," explains Warner. "For example, our first year was Sir Stirling Moss. After Moss it was Phil Hill, then Hurley Haywood, Brian Redman, Carroll Shelby, and Dan Gurney. This year's honoree, Richard Petty, will serve as keynote speaker at the gala dinner on Saturday.

To celebrate the event's 15th year, Warner decided to mint the commemorative coins with the names of all previous honorees on the back. "We had done this for the 10-year anniversary and it was very popular," he recalls. For the 15th anniversary edition Warner returned to the source that minted the 10-year medallions, Osborne Coinage Company.

The coins serve as treasured keepsakes for entrants in the show, but they have a financial appeal as well. The Concours makes a limited number available for retail sale during and after the event. Every dollar from their sale is used to defray the show costs. That allows the money raised from entrant fees, admissions, and souvenirs to be diverted to worthwhile local causes.

A longtime enthusiast, Warner is passionate about the Amelia Island Concours d'Elegance. He's quick to point out the importance of the many volunteers needed to pull off this huge undertaking. And clearly he understands how vital the sponsors are, too. Having a memento to serve as a "thank you" to these important members of the Concours family is also important. But the item chosen has to be significant, both as a reward for the time and effort expended, and because of the high-profile nature of the event itself. Despite the relatively small quantity—350 were produced—custom medallions are well suited to the task. "The medallions have a lot of different uses for us but mainly it is a lasting memory of the show that they can keep," says Warner. "You certainly can't break it and you can't bend it, so it has a very long lifetime."

Each time the medallion is viewed by the entrants, sponsors, close supporters and volunteers, each will be reminded of the success of the 15th annual Concours d'Elegance. And, hopefully, they'll also recall the wonderful work undertaken by the charitable organizations that benefit from the financial success of the event. The memories and thoughts stirred by a look at the medallions will be unique to the individual. That is fitting for an event as unique as the Amelia Island Concours d'Elegance—and the lives touched by the works done by the charities benefitting from it.