



Vintage cars and more highlight the Gasparilla Concours d'Elegance

It's a three-day celebration of classic vehicles.

🕒 November 12, 2021 👤 by Michael Mikuliza 💬 0 comments

The Gasparilla Concours d'Elegance returns for a three-day celebration of vintage, and historic, cars Dec. 3-5. This year's theme is Celebrating 100 Years of Automotive Excellence and will take place at the TPC Golf Club in Lutz. A variety of activities are planned for this event and proceeds go to charity, making it an important part of the Gasparilla season in the Tampa Bay area.

Cars in the Park, a car show, cocktail party and charity auction kicks off the event on Friday, Dec. 3, at 6 p.m. Local car clubs and individuals will show their classic cars, motorcycles, hot rods and exotic automobiles. Live entertainment, food and cocktails, including Gaspar's Grog, will be available throughout the night.

A charity auction featuring many high-end items, and experiences, will

highlight the night. The auction is an exciting part of the Gasparilla Concours fundraising effort in support of the Friedreich's Ataxia Research Alliance. FARA is a national, nonprofit organization dedicated to the pursuit of scientific research leading to treatments and a cure for Friedreich's ataxia. Tampa Bay resident Paul Avery serves on the board of directors for the organization. Friedreich's ataxia is an inherited disease that damages the nervous system. Symptoms usually begin between the ages of 5 and 15. The damage affects the spinal cord and the nerves that control muscle movement in the arms and legs.

Saturday features a concours d'elegance and is a completely different lineup of automobiles in a competition for best in show. More than 100 vintage cars, fully restored to their original condition, will be on display. Among them will be a 1921 Kenworthy model 6-55, which was selected as the featured automobile because of its rarity and automotive history. There are only two examples of Kenworthy cars still in existence and the only one of this kind. Other activities planned for Saturday include a vintage plane flyover, a vintage fashion show, youth activities, live entertainment and a red-carpet awards ceremony. The opening ceremonies start at 10 a.m.

What makes a concours d'elegance different from other car shows? A concours is an invitation-only event for the cars involved. "It's truly special and exclusive. Owners must be invited to present their automobiles and once a car is shown, it's not invited back for at least five years, so each year brings a completely new field of cars," says Joanne Pistorius, chairman of the Gasparilla Concours d'Elegance. "VIP tent tickets will offer the best seats in the house overlooking the field, awards ceremony, and includes meals, private bar and more. But with all this elegance and history on display, we want to engage our young people, which is why children under 16 are free."

A nickel tour of the region will take place on Sunday morning, Dec. 5. The tour starts at 10 a.m. in Odessa and will make its way through the historic areas in Hillsborough County. More information and tickets to the event are available at gasparillaconcours.com. ♦

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