

# MEADOW BROOK



## THE MEADOW BROOK CONCOURS EXPERIENCE

The concept of a parade of elegance began in Europe. Fine automobiles, clothes and accessories would highlight a summer's day, with special awards given to those cars whose design and craftsmanship were worthy of awards denoting style and grace.

The popularity of the concours d'Elegance in this country owes much to Del Monte Properties which started the Pebble Beach, California event in 1950. This event continues to set the patterns and standards for the Meadow Brook Concours and similar events across the country.

The Meadow Brook Concours owes its invention to Don Sommer, President of the American Arrow Corporation and a Detroit area car collector. In late 1977, he sent a letter to Dean Lowell Eklund of Oakland University, site of Meadow Brook Hall and for former estate of Matilda Dodge Wilson.

"I think the timing would be ripe to have a one-day Vintage and Classic Car Show at Meadow Brook in the late summer and, if successful to continue it on an annual basis," he wrote. "I visualize perhaps 100 super quality autos assembling here by invitation only."

Sommer contacted other local car enthusiasts and people within the Detroit automobile industry, asking for their ideas in putting together such an event. Not only could the event be a fund-raiser for Meadow Brook Hall; it would be a tribute to the golden age of automobiles and to the city that popularized them.

# HISTORIC RACES

Offering early support to Sommer's idea was David Holls, an Executive Designer with General Motors. Holls proposed a unique judging system that would emphasize design merit rather than restoration alone. Elegance and style of line and facet would be of prime importance.

A committee was formed and it met in January, 1978. In addition to Sommer and Holls, that first committee was comprised of top automotive designers Dick Teague of American Motors and William Mitchell of General Motors, as well as Otto Rosenbusch, Chrysler; Jim Guinlan, Ford Motor; and Del DeRees, American Motors. All were vintage and classic car collectors. Plus, there was Joe Kelly, Kelly Theatre Services; John McClure,

D'Arcy MacManus Masius; John Conde, Henry Ford Museum; and James Bradley, Detroit Public Library. Representing Oakland University were Ken Coiffman, Margaret Twyman, Lowell Eklund, George Karas, Richard Moore and Dick Leonard.

The ground rules for the Meadow Brook Concours were then laid out. The event would be invitation only, assuring the finest and fullest representations of the various automobile design periods. Approximately 100 automobiles would be selected and divided into classifications, with awards given to a percentage of three. As a further prerequisite, all cars would have to enter and leave the field under their own power.

