

NAPLES

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TABLESCAPE TALENTS

*Naples designer
shines on HGTV's
Table Wars*

REVVED UP

*Local car
museum keeps
auto research
humming*

MOBILE MORSELS

*Food trucks serve
up worldly eats*

WILFREDO EMANUEL

CONTENTS

MARCH 2022

FEATURES

122 / HIS PLACE AT THE TABLE

Interior designer Wilfredo Emanuel shines on HGTV's *Table Wars*

By Jane E. Enos

130 / ALL CYLINDERS FIRING

More than a car museum, Revs Institute drives automotive research excellence

By Mary Jo Ring

136 / A YOUNG & WELL-VERSED POET

Local poet Emma Sullivan puts words to good work

By Kalynd Parrish and Jane E. Enos

142 / MAIDEN VOYAGE

Sky's the limit when modern edge meets classic 1950s mode

Photography by Gabor Jurina

152 / ON THE GO

International food trucks offer veritable victuals

By Mark Spivak

130

DETAILS IMPRESS IN THIS 1948
FERRARI 166 SPIDER CORSA ON
DISPLAY AT REVS INSTITUTE

JERRY RABINOWITZ



ALL CYLINDERS FIRING

REVS INSTITUTE SHARES COOL CARS WITH THE PUBLIC WHILE SERVING AS A SOPHISTICATED RESEARCH CENTER FOR AUTOMOTIVE LEARNING



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: RENÉ LALIQUE-DESIGNED COQ MAIN CAR ORNAMENT; 1930 BUGATTI, TYPE 35B GRAND PRIX; RENÉ LALIQUE-DESIGNED FALCON CAR ORNAMENT; CHIEF CURATOR SCOTT GEORGE IN REVS INSTITUTE ENTRANCE. OPPOSITE PAGE: 1934 LASALLE, CONVERTIBLE COUPE

BY MARY JO RING
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JERRY RABINOWITZ

Horseshoe Drive. While the name might conjure up images of a two-lane road weaving between ranches out West, in Naples, it is anything but that. There isn't a horse in sight.

What is ironic about the narrow lane north of the Naples Airport is that it is home to one of the most significant museums in the world focused on the mode of transportation that replaced the horse—the automobile. Meet Revs Institute, which houses one of the most valuable car collections on earth.

Carefully selected for historical importance, rarity, technical paths blazed, aesthetics, or even social significance are 113 cars under one fortified roof. The building itself, a structure of modern architecture, has a sole purpose—to protect the prized possessions contained within. Step inside the front doors and look beyond the lobby to the three perfectly preserved bright red race cars on a raised plat-





COURTESY OF REVS INSTITUTE

CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE: FRONT VIEW OF REVS INSTITUTE'S FORTIFIED BUILDING; 1912 HISPANO-SUIZA, 1ST ALFONSO XIII; 1896 PANHARD ET LEVASSOR WAGONETTE.

form, as huge windows immediately behind frame a picturesque backdrop of blue sky and swaying palm trees. It's a stunning view that draws in visitors who are free to browse at their own pace or take a docent-led tour through decades of some of the most astonishing and rare autos of the past century.

From the collection's oldest vehicle, an 1896 Panhard et Levassor Wagonette, to the 1995 McLaren F1—a car with a top speed of 240 mph—every vehicle is meticulously cared for by a team of restoration technicians. This team, with more than 350 years of combined experience, not only maintains the shiny chrome, leather seats, and fancy wheels, it also ensures every car is ready to be cranked up at any time.

"All of the vehicles are still running, and we pride ourselves on being able to understand and maintain these historical cars, some of which are over 100 years old," says Scott George, the curator of collections at

Revs Institute. "In addition to general maintenance and preservation work, we are involved in many events each year, which include historic races, reenactments, and more. During any given year, there could be 40 cars coming through our workshop just being prepared for events worldwide."

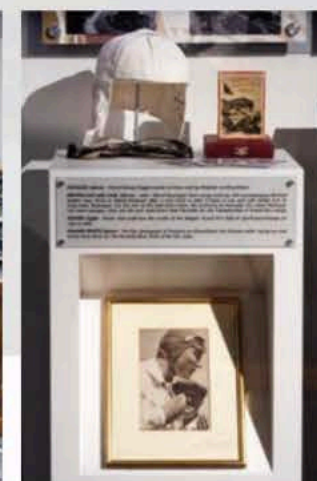
Most of the treasured cars housed at the not-for-profit Revs Institute are on loan from Miles Collier Collections. Miles C. Collier was born into an American automotive family. His father, Miles, and his uncle, Sam, were among the first Americans to race at Le Mans

and are also recognized for bringing organized sports car racing to the United States in the 1930s.

Young Miles fell in love with cars and began racing and collecting at an early age. By 1986, he had amassed many vehicles and needed to find a home for his esteemed collection. He chose Naples and began pursuing his vision for Revs Institute, which opened in 2008.

A simple display of old cars collecting dust is not what Collier had in mind. Instead, he envisioned an institute that would serve as both a physical and digital resource for the study of the automobile. He imagined a place that would deepen the understanding of how the car influenced and sculpted the culture of the last century.

Today, visitors come from all over the world to see and experience the influential cars that molded history. In 2022, Revs Institute is likely to see some



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE: RESTORATION TECHNICIANS IN SERVICE AREA; RACING RELICS, INCLUDING A PHOTOGRAPH OF GERMAN MOTOR RACING ACE MANFRED VON BRAUCHITSCH; REVS INSTITUTE LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES.



RESEARCH IN MOTION

Do you want to verify that the car in your photo is a 1965 Porsche 356? Want to know what engine was under the hood of a 1934 LaSalle? Or perhaps you want to know what the price tag was on the 1914 Rolls-Royce Silver Ghost. If you're searching for any automotive fact that occurred from the time of the horse and buggy to today, there's a good chance you'll find it in the Revs Institute Library and Archives. And if it isn't there, the librarians will point you in the right direction.

"Our focus has always been on supporting the car collections within the museum, but our research holdings are incredibly deep," says Mark Vargas, chief operating officer and director of the library and archives. "Our mission is

to make the information as accessible as we possibly can for researchers and enthusiasts worldwide. We understand the modern world wants it right on their phone, so everything is searchable online."

At the end of 2021, the institute had 700,000 photographic images, 26,000 books, and 1,000 magazine titles posted on its website. In addition, it offers images of posters, mascots, race programs, sales literature, trophies, service manuals, and more.

"I've spent 35 years working in academic libraries, and there's nothing like this," Vargas says. "We love the work we do, and our best days are the days when we connect the researchers with their answers."

20,000 visitors pass through these four main galleries:

- Porsche—Designed to Excel
- Automobility—The Car, the Road, and Modern Life
- Vitesse—Sports Motoring and Motoring Sports
- Revs—Racing Cars and Racing Men

Museumgoers who purchase the docent-led tour visit the workshop, where they can witness restoration technicians carefully maintaining and preserving some of the most expensive machinery on wheels. Every technician is highly trained in a specific field—such as engines, metalwork, paint, upholstery, and so on. Each is willing to train car enthusiasts and collectors around the world in how to properly care for vehicles of historical significance.

Beyond the extraordinary car collection, Revs Institute has one of the largest archives of automotive history on the planet. With more than a million photographic



FROM TOP: 1937 DELAHAYE, TYPE 135MS SPECIAL ROADSTER, WITH HERMÈS LEATHER; 1938 BMW, TYPE 328 ROADSTER. OPPOSITE PAGE: 1995 MCLAREN F1 FEATURING THREE SEATS AND MIDDLE STEERING POSITION

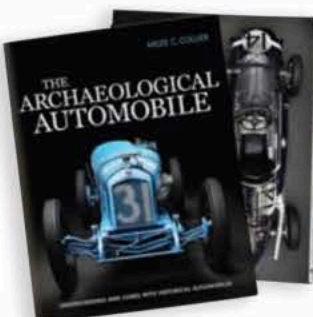
negatives and transparencies in its physical collections, the ever-expanding library is fulfilling its mission to preserve the future of the past.

“We want to have a larger digital footprint, so we are in the process of digitizing everything and putting it on websites for everyone to access,” George says. “Beyond that, we are in the process of launching Revs Learning, an array of educational programs that include college courses and hands-on experiences. Revs Learning is about sharing the history and taking it on the road.”

The automobile collection itself and the institute’s research and educational focus are what make Revs one of the premier destinations for automotive enthusiasts and researchers.

“We are honored to be considered among the world’s leading automotive museums,” says George. “But more important to us is to have the general public come into this building—some that have no car interest or no real involvement in the car industry at all—but to have just everyday people come through and leave with a deeper appreciation for how the automobile has impacted us as a society. That’s the real honor for us.”

Revs Institute is open Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Visitors must purchase tickets online in advance. No walk-up visitors can be accommodated. (revsinstitute.org) ◀◀



JUST RELEASED:
**THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL
AUTOMOBILE**

Miles C. Collier’s new book, *The Archaeological Automobile*, released in mid-January, contemplates the importance of preserving the automotive past. Collier’s analysis, presented through stories and practical examples, explores how we should understand and preserve the collective cultural memory embodied in the automobile. (collierautomedia.com)



**TAKE A
FREE 3D TOUR**

REVS INSTITUTE OFFERS
A FREE APP ALLOWING USERS
TO TAKE A 3D TOUR OF THE
GALLERIES. BESIDES LEARNING
ABOUT EVERY CAR IN THE
MUSEUM, YOU CAN VIEW
FEATURED FOOTAGE FROM
TEST DRIVES.

