

Champions, craftsmen and collectors honored at Annual Gathering

America's Automotive Trust bestowed its highest accolades upon a deserving group of individuals at the Concours Club Annual Gathering held September 7 in conjunction with the Wheels & Heels Annual Gala.

The prestigious Nicola Bulgari Award – named after the famous luxury goods magnate, renowned car collector and AAT board member – is the Trust's highest honor and is presented annually in recognition of an individual's lifelong efforts to promote America's automotive heritage through education, car restoration, and/or collecting classic cars.

This year's recipient was longtime friend and champion of AAT Rod Alberts, the Executive Director of the Detroit Auto Dealers Association (DADA) and the North American International Auto Show (NAIAS), who was instrumental in launching the LeMay Collection and ACM to the world. In 2003, then-ACM President David Madeira worked with Alberts to secure space at NAIAS to launch "Drive for America's Car Museum." Alberts is also the co-founder of AAT's highly successful "The Drive Home" series, a cross-country vintage car rally to NAIAS that promotes America's automotive heritage in advance of the show.

"Rod's creativity, encouragement and leadership over the years have provided immense help to America's Car Museum and the Trust as we promote America's automotive heritage. The partnership with NAIAS provides an invaluable endorsement of our relevance to today's automotive culture," said Madeira.

The 2019 President's Award was given to John D. Barline for his significant contributions to the success of LeMay – America's Car

Museum. Barline was instrumental in the establishing of ACM; securing land contracts, handling disputes, planning a capital campaign, and helping to secure the New Market Tax Credit Financing agreement.

"John has been an important partner in many ways, providing us with wise legal and strategic counsel and strong leadership as Board Chairman when we launched the drive to build the Museum," said Madeira. "We are thrilled to be able to present him with this honor, forever recognizing his many, significant contributions to ACM."

Receiving the 2019 Master Craftsman Award was restorer Jason Wenig, owner of The Creative Workshop in Dania Beach, Florida, a world-class, multi-marque restoration shop known for taking on difficult projects with an eye towards historical accuracy. Wenig and his team have scored major concours wins at events like Pebble Beach, Amelia Island, Cavallino and Villa d'Este. An outspoken supporter of the RPM Foundation, Wenig is passionate about the need to educate and train the next generation of restoration craftsmen. "Jason is the type of individual whose passion for automobiles keeps the American motoring legacy thriving," said David Madeira.

Also recognized was 2019 Featured Collector Alan Granberg. Granberg – an AAT board member and prolific car collector – will have some of his vehicles displayed throughout the year at ACM. "The Featured Collector is an individual that looks beyond a category of cars or a single collection," said ACM Curator of Exhibitory Scot Keller. "They are a rare class whose expertise, passion and focus on advancing the collector car culture are vital to sustaining America's automotive heritage." 



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