

Kissel "Gold Bug" Speedster at Pebble Beach



James Wright



Jason Wenig and James Wright

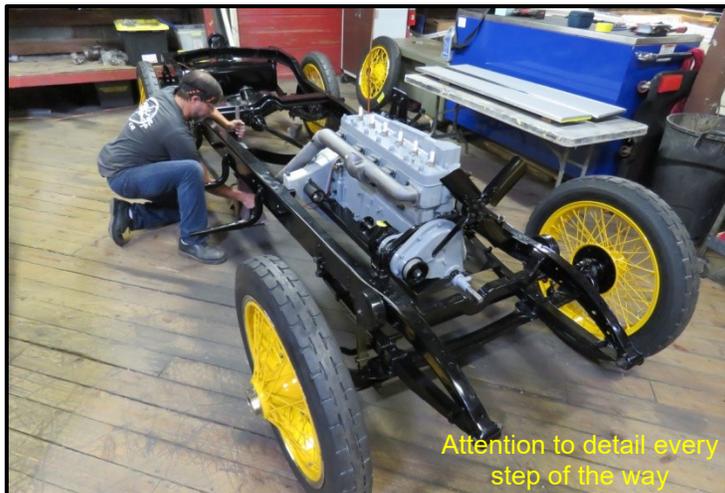


At the June membership meeting, the Fort Lauderdale AACA was treated to a wonderful presentation by Jason Wenig, owner of The Creative Workshop. The Creative Workshop in Dania Beach, Florida, is known worldwide for its award winning restorations of high-end antique automobiles.

Jason was scheduled first on the agenda and given freedom to speak on any car related topic he chose. He decided to take the members on a journey through taking an extremely rare antique car in barely running condition to the lawn of the Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance. Jason gave a slideshow of the restoration from disassembly to awards presentation and spoke in detail about the entire process.



Kissel Kars were prized by many celebrities of the era including Amelia Earhart, Jack Dempsey, Douglas Fairbanks, Greta Garbo, Al Jolson, Mary Pickford, and Rudy Vallee.



Owners Andrew and Tanya Heller delivered a well-worn 1921 Kissel 6-45 "Gold Bug" Speedster (previously owned by actress Virginia Brown Faire) to The Creative Workshop with the goal to compete in the prestigious Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance. Less than 2700 Kissel Speedsters were built over a 14 year period. This car is the only 1921 Kissel Speedster known existing today. The shop put thousands of hours of research and work into the project, replacing incorrect parts and, at times, fabricating duplicates of the original parts that were not available or repairable. Along the way they discovered original burlap under the upholstery and cobra grained leather. The car was restored better than new, but extreme detail was paid into duplicating the original appearance and process; wood that was originally brush painted was brush painted during the restoration.



The entire restoration was documented by a film crew from the MotorTrend TV show "Long Road to Monterey."

The result was more than anyone expected. After sizing up the competition, the hope was for at least a 3rd place finish. When the award for 3rd place was called and it wasn't the Kissel the thought was they would get 2nd place. Second place was called and again the Kissel didn't win. Then the moment everyone waited for – the Kissel was awarded 1st place in the most prestigious Concours event in the world.

Since Pebble Beach the Kissel has won: 2019 Boca Raton Concours d'Elegance – Best in Class; Amelia Island Concours d'Elegance – 2nd in Class; and, 2019 The Elegance at Hershey – Best in Class (Spirit of America, Best American Car, 1920-1931.)

