

Tips About Concours Judging

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Spring is nearly upon us. Porsches are coming out of their cocoons. Metro members are preparing them for the various events coming up: Autocross, Track, Rally and, of course, Concours. Here is where I come in. If you read on, you will come to many concours tips geared toward novice participants. But I must give credit where it is due. Metro's Concours Guru, Charles Mekeel, and I sat down for brunch on a recent Sunday with Henry Hoeh to discuss some ideas about the sport. Thanks to you both, guys.

What do Judges look for?

- * Before judging begins, every car is "perfect." Judges look for imperfections and deduct points.

- * Preparation: Cleanliness, absence of scratches, dings and dents. A stone chip that was touched up will fare better than one on which no effort to repair had been extended. Stuff happens, but you can't ignore those chips. The judges won't overlook them.

- * PCA judging is "Hands On." Expect to have your car's engine probed, its seat cushions parted, and the storage compartment checked for dirt and debris.

What should, or should not, be in the car?

- * Whatever came with the car from the factory should be in the car. This includes owner's manual, spare tire, tool kit, jack and air compressor (if factory supplied).

- * Take out anything not supplied by the factory: After-market mats, maps, tissues, loose change, radar detectors, CDs, cellular telephones, etc.

Most common mistakes

- * Lack of knowledge about what will be judged.

- * Not emptying the glove compartment.

- * Attempting to prepare and clean the car the day before an event. You are supposed to be competing in a show, not trying to sell the car to a neighbor.

- * Too many novices focus 90% of their efforts on polishing and waxing, and the other 10% on whatever there's time left to work on.

- * Spending too much time on the shiny areas and not enough in obscure places (e.g., pedal cluster).

- * Applying too much dressing to seats and tires (a huge pet peeve of mine). If a judge runs a hand across the dashboard and it comes up greasy, oily, or messy, expect points to be deducted.

Human Nature and Judging

* Properly trained judges tend to go to the same places on each car. Know your car, but more importantly, know your judges. Follow them around your car. Watch them at work. The judge will know you are focused and care about what's going on, not off looking at everyone else's car. You can learn much by watching a judge walk around your Porsche. But do not distract the judges, which might imply an attempt at deception.

* First impressions count. Make sure your car is shiny as the judges walk up to it. This is the only time the shine will have a subconscious effect since only the exterior judge will look at it carefully and even then, really will be looking past the shine into the paint itself. When the doors are opened. does the interior smell like leather or will an aroma reminiscent of Kentucky Fried Chicken overwhelm the interior judge? This judge will appreciate it if you open the windows a bit to let the car air out. Judges do not like to be uncomfortable. After all, they are volunteers and not being paid to do this job.

* Judges are human. They occasionally make errors, so check your score sheets when returned.

* Be smart enough to avoid antagonizing the judges. Some of the same crew may judge at the next event you enter. Try to remember that this is a competition but still needs to remain on a friendly level. Many of the people against whom you compete are your friends.

* Finally, be patient. At the end of the day, everyone is tired, anxious to get the award ceremony over and go home. Determining the winners does take time, but don't try to hurry the scorers. Let them work in peace The sooner they can arrange the order of finish and give out trophies, the better. And always remember to keep the shiny side up.