



SCARAB

The Legend Returns

SCARAB 50TH ANNIVERSARY REUNION CELEBRATION WEEKEND RECAP

Saturday, July 19, 2008, at the Osthoff Resort in Elkhart Lake, Wisconsin

As a follow up to our announcement about the Scarab 50th Anniversary Reunion at Elkhart Lake, here are a recap and comments from a few of the original people involved with Lance Reventlow's RAI, and members of some of the now-famous teams that raced these beautiful cars.

First: The Road America event. It was four days of "warm and muggy", but the track stayed dry most of the time, and the sound of vintage engines going through their gears was non-stop. Hats off to all who brought their treasures and raced them with gusto, and to the track staff for a very smooth and safe four days! The Lolas, the F-5000s, and every race car there provided all those present with a look into the past and the chance to see and hear racing history. And speaking of 'history', Scarab fans got a double-treat – they enjoyed the chance to meet, talk with, and listen to many of the people involved with the original Scarabs. They also got to look over five of the eight original cars. In addition, there was the 25th Anniversary roadster built with the Reventlow name! Richard Reventlow made the trip to Elkhart Lake to once again reiterate his respect for the memory of Lance. The two RHD roadsters of Augie Pabst and Miles Collier, plus the roadster built by Richard and now owned by Bob Sirna, were an awesome sight on the racetrack. So was the rear-engined Scarab, driven by Augie III, and the Formula Scarabs. It is hard to believe the impact the original Scarabs had on the racing scene in the late '50's and early '60's. Now, fifty years later, that legacy is as strong as ever, and the appreciation of the Scarab people and cars continues to grow.

Second: The Scarab People. A great amount of time and effort went into this small number of cars. We hope to bring you more of the history with articles and interviews with many of the 'originals'. In the meantime, here are some comments from a few members of the group who attended the Scarab Reunion Dinner and the Road America event.

Richard Reventlow. The name is unique and the family history fascinating. Richard's respect for his family and the memory of Lance are profound. It was a pleasure meeting Richard and we look forward to further interviews. His experiences building the 25th Anniversary Scarab in Lance's memory are stories in themselves. Asked his thoughts about the weekend, Richard cordially paid tribute to all in attendance and, of course, to the Scarabs themselves. He was even nice enough to stop by our display and compliment us on our project. We will bring you his account of building the Scarab Anniversary roadster at a later date. Fortunately, he has an excellent memory, and the story is a great one.

Bruce Kessler. Long before the Scarab was even a thought in Lance's very bright mind, Bruce and Lance were school buddies. Off they went to Europe, and the Scarab soon followed. When Bruce "walked away" from the Scarab days, as did Lance, he busied himself with life and hasn't really looked back too much – until now. He also has sharp recall and is enjoying going back to his memory vault and pulling out many adventures. It is our hope to bring Bruce's stories to this page as well. We asked for his comments about the RA venue, the original cars, and all the attention paid to them and the reunion dinner. Bruce related the most important part to him, both past and present – "The people! I have to say, it has been the people involved with the Scarabs." As for the event itself, "A whole lot of fun!" More from Bruce in future articles.

Chuck Pelly. The timeless and beautiful lines of the Scarab body came directly from his young, but very talented mind, then onto paper, and soon after, into aluminum. The lines of that 1958 design stop people in their tracks even today. To see a Scarab in person is to really appreciate how stunning the original cars were in the 50's and 60's, and how they remain so today. Sadly, the first Scarab, now owned by Rob Walton, was not in attendance at the Reunion. Augie Pabst owns and drives the Meister Brauser car and Miles Collier owns the #3 chassis. The Collier car, with the number 5 painted on, is the Scarab Chuck Daigh originally drove. We'll be keeping track of Chuck Pelly and watching for more of his talented renderings fifty years later. His comment: "Absolutely stunning display of the original cars in better-than-new condition!"

Harry Heuer. Truly one of the most colorful characters in the Scarab history, Harry too has many tales – however, he feels that not all are appropriate for publication. Harry played a big part in adventures of the early days. We will try to pry as many "memories" as possible out of Harry and Don and publish those "that can appear in print". What a kick it was to see Harry and Don blasting up the paddock hill at Elkhart Lake in our reproduction car – kids at heart and still great drivers! When asked what thought he would like to pass along, Harry emphatically said, "My crew! Absolutely could not have had any success without them. They were a bunch of stock car guys who would work for twenty four hours, bitch for five minutes, drink a beer and work for another twenty-four hours! I called them the Black Jacket crew." Harry was a little evasive as to the reason(s) for that title, but did mention something about someone being 'detained' for a short period of time somewhere along the racing trail.

The Scarab Reunion Dinner. The two-year efforts of Bob Sirna, Don Devine, Augie Pabst, Jim Jeffords, and many others resulted in a 50-year history lesson in one very memorable evening. About 170 attended. Original members of the Scarab organization and race teams were there. The interviews were as fascinating and entertaining as the people relating their stories. Bruce Kessler said that Warren Olsen's shop in So Cal was "a bunch of young California hot rodders with some adult supervision. Warren was the adult supervision." Sonny Balcaen was a young talented crewmember. Phil Remington, the master of ingenuity and fabrication, related some accounts. Bill Wuesthoff and many other names and faces were present and hope to catch up with each and bring their memories here. One very special member who almost made the reunion and was tremendously missed, was Chuck Daigh. Chuck was looking forward to the reunion but sadly passed a few months shy. Bill Krueger gave a tribute to Chuck and there was not a dry eye in the room. With the above mentioned names and more – like Augie Pabst, Bill Wuesthoff, Jim Jeffords, Ronnie Kaplan, Bill Leahey, Jack Baschieri, Nick Decker, and other "Scarab Originals" – we'll pass along as many interesting tales as we can collect. Thanks to all who attended and gave us your thoughts, and to the dedicated group who made it possible.

Stay tuned for more history and stories from the colorful "Scarab People".

News Flash: We are working with SVRA for approval.