

Romande Section celebrates 110 Years of Rolls-Royce

ROMANDE SECTION CELEBRATES 110 YEARS OF ROLLS-ROYCE

Celebrating the 110 years of Rolls-Royce with a time-line of distinguished Rolls-Royce motorcars spanning all models from 1904 to the present day to an audience of over 20,000 visitors at Morges overlooking the lake of Geneva has been the enviable concept of the Romande Section. More than 100 Rolls-Royce and Bentley cars in-all were present. Also included was the working Merlin Spitfire engine of Peter Grieve and Helen Thirsk. Careful planning with the close co-operation of our special sponsors and the firm involvement of the Swiss Rolls-Royce importers lead to the success of this important event.

The Romande Section has spearheaded the development of partnership (a source of support hitherto rather ignored by the club and its sections as whole) with our characteristic emphasis placed upon elegance, culture and the mutual enjoyment of Members which is the original essence of being a true Rolls-Royce and Bentley Enthusiast. Putting this all together over the last few years has been the unfailing task of our rather special French language Section based in Geneva. With our small but effective committee under the Chairmanship of Gérard Le Clerc, Vice-Chairman Georges Cots, Secretary Sir Sidharta (Sidhi) Dutta and Treasurer Pierre Favrod-Coune plus the special assistance of Marketing Manager Nicole Aebi and our Honorary Member Walter Freidl, these arrangements have been very successful. The distinguished firm of Chopard is a principal Partner for the Morges event.

The Swiss Classic British Car Meeting at Morges, organized by Keith Wynn, attracts over 1800 classic British cars and over 20,000 visitors each year. This year's 23rd meeting held Rolls-Royce as the Marque of Honour to celebrate its 110 years of producing 'The Best Cars in the World' and our President Gérard and his committee organized the complete Rolls-Royce concept for this event. Celebrities flying into Geneva for the show included the immediate R-REC Former-Chairman Trevor Baldwin and wife Patsy as well as James and Annabel Hinchliffe, producers of the prize-winning Rippon Bros. Rolls-Royce book and unexpectedly a 1935 Rippon bodied limousine arrived from Lichtenstein too! The delightful Robin Dean drove himself over from Scotland in his 20/25 Tickford (1932) while John Goose and his lovely wife Minty joined us traveling from England with their 20/25 Park Ward Tourer (1934). Jim and Angie Reynolds came along in their beautiful Silver Dawn with friend Karen Bond for this unrepeatable event.

Our event began on the morning of Friday 3rd October in Mollens with Michael and Antonia Bruce where our cars were parked in front of their lovely home for champers and a performance classical music played by our President Gérard Le Clerc, the concert cellist accompanied by Anne Chollet on the piano, which brought the tears to our eyes. Luncheon was held in the Auberge Communal de Mollens which specializes in game cuisine - deliciously served with glorious Swiss wines. After lunch we drove our cars through the picturesque vineyards, past Vuflens-le-Château and on to visit Château Prangins (Musée National Suisse)

where we parked our Rolls-Royce and Bentleys in front of the castle entrance followed by a wonderful tour of the art treasures and herb gardens.

Then we were off to the Partners evening which was hosted by Thilo and the lovely Katya Martin, director of Rolls-Royce Motors Geneva at Nyon. Our Partners arrived in force with special clients, full of enthusiasm and ready to discuss the event of the next day at Morges around the Spitfire Merlin engine and to take their rides in the latest Phantom cars. Cigars, champers and fine food were on-hand backed up with impressive night-time views over the sparkling Lake Geneva.

Morges was special! In pride-of-place in front of the castle was our Rolls-Royce time-line arranged by Sir Sidharta Dutta, the International expert on Chinese and Japanese Antiquities, for this special event. Sidhi had selected seventeen distinctive Rolls-Royce motorcars spanning all models from 1904 to the present day. Our thanks also go to Ruedi Müller of the Swiss Section for joining us to complete the time-line with his Barker 1929 Phantom II:

DECAUVILLE, voiturette, 1902 - Pierre Chapuis
RR 20hp, Doctors Coupe, 1928 - Rémi Hakim
RR 20/25, Tickford Salon, 1932 - Robin Dean
RR 20/25, Tourer Park Ward, 1934 - John Goose
RR 20/25, Sedanca de Ville, 1935 - Sir Sidhi Dutta
RR Phantom I, Roadster 1926 - Jean-Pierre Baudet
RR Phantom II, Barker Sedancalette de Ville, 1929 - Ruedi Müller
RR 20/25, Rippon Limousine, 1935 - Sven Beham
RR Phantom III, Sedanca de Ville, 1936, - Jean-Claude Givel
RR Phantom III Sports Sedanca, 1937, - James Cunningham
RR Silver Dawn, 1953, - Gérard Le Clerc
RR Silver Wraith, Park Ward, 1954, - Alain Celle
RR Silver Cloud III, Drophead Coupe, 1964 - Alain Rouhaud
RR Silver Shadow I, Rolls-Royce Ltd, 1969 - Michael Bruce
RR Phantom VI, Mulliner Park Ward, 1971 - Pierre Favrod-Coune
RR new Phantom, Rolls-Royce Ltd, 2014 - Thilo Martin
RR new Wraith, Rolls-Royce Ltd, 2014 Thilo Martin

Other Members Rolls-Royce and Bentleys were also on-show by the delightful Gazebo in the castle gardens, where English Cream Teas were being served by waiters in Morning Dress whilst parking on the rolling lawns stretching down to the lake. Our Member Stephen Forsey was present with his 1925 Bentley 3 litre Speed model. Over 100 Rolls-Royce and Bentleys (110 Rolls-Royce and Bentley for 110 years of Rolls-Royce!) came from Switzerland and in France (our Romande Section area includes the areas of Alsace, Jura, Lyon down to Monaco and the French Riviera as well as many others from as far away as Scotland). Many prospective club members were also in attendance at Morges to see the show.

The Merlin Spitfire engine of Peter Grieve and Helen Thirsk, brought over specially from the UK, was operating in the courtyard, cordoned off by the side of Morges castle and the joyful noise made by this historic motor could be heard all over the castle grounds. Blue Harvest was principal Partner for this remarkable Rolls-Royce Merlin engine display.

In the VIP enclosure in front of the castle Gérard Le Clerc provided us with a concert of delightful classical music before speeches were presented by Trevor Baldwin and others. Trevor was the former Chairman of the RREC before handing over to Duncan Feetham, now the current Chairman. In his speech Trevor told us that RREC Hunt House is the centre of our Sections, our Archives and together with the Sir Henry Royce Memorial Foundation is our international presence for all interests in Rolls-Royce and Bentley. Nicole Aebi invited each Partner personally to say a few words about their enthusiasm for this event. The proceedings terminated with a special presentation of 10 year Membership Lapel Badges by Trevor to Gérard and Walter to Sidhi as a token of appreciation for all the admirable and hard work that has been done by them both for establishing the Section Romande upon the firm foundation of respect that it now holds in the Club's regard.

The Swiss TSR 1 Mobile TV team covered the event and made two 3 minute documentaries about our Rolls-Royce; hosted on film by Gérard Le Clerc and Keith Wynn, which was shown on TV as part of the TSR 1 Saturday Noon and Evening News. Our committee have always fostered close ties with the media both in Switzerland and France and we are confident that our membership will be steadily increasing in the future.

Voted THE most chic and glamorous event, 'to be seen at' by all the people present mingling among the Rolls-Royce of the time-line with the historic backdrop of Castle Morges and the azure blue lake of Geneva glimmering in the Swiss October sunshine, Annabel Hinchliffe confided "if only this could continue on for a few more days! It is simply sublime!"

The Morges Event finally drew to a close around 5 o'clock p.m. and as we motored off home in our lovely cars our thoughts turned to our next meeting which is the President's Christmas Luncheon to be held on the 29th November 2014.

Our Partners reflect their esteem for the marque and the Rolls-Royce Enthusiasts' Club's Romande Section and we appreciate the generous help and support that they have provided:

Banque Cantonale de Genève Private Banking
Barnes International Luxury Real Estate
Blue Harvest Geneva
Château de Morges et ses musées - Pascal Pouly
Canton de Vaud
Cave de Genève
Chopard
Rolls-Royce Motors Geneva - Thilo Martin
Rhein Cigars Geneva

Syndic de Morges and Ville de Morges

We look forward to their continued enthusiasm and support as our section progresses confidently into the future and we are also indebted to Greubel Forsey for its interest and engagement concerning our RREC Section Romande and Rolls-Royce in all its expressions.

Walter Freidl, Honorary Member, Section Romande

