

JEWELRY

A. Lange & Shne connects horology, automaking with web series

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The vintage car showcase is held annually. Image credit: A. Lange & Shne

By ZACH JAMES

Richemont-owned watchmaker A. Lange & Shne is bringing together its fine manufacturing and retro cars via its latest release.

Resurrecting the "Talk to the Driver" web series for its fourth episode after a year-long hiatus, the maison spoke to Fritz Burkard, winner of the best of show award at the 2022 Concours of Elegance at Hampton Court Palace vintage vehicle showcase, ahead of the 2023 edition. Held from Sept. 1 to 3 in the U.K., the event brings together the worlds of haute horology and automaking prowess.

In conversation

Talking with Mr. Burkard and his two daughters, A. Lange & Shne's CEO Wilhelm Schmid both drive classic cars around Europe.

"Talk to the Driver The Pearl Collection' Episode 4" showcases the titular vehicle assemblage, made up of motors from across time periods, from pre-World War II muscle to 1970s wood-paneled station wagons.

The episode details each speaker's spark for their love of automobiles

"For me, cars happen [in my heart] and if a design has a history, if the patina makes [my heart] twitch, then I'm excited about the car," Mr Burkard says in the video.

"It doesn't matter what brand it is, it doesn't matter how old it is, it doesn't matter how much [it costs]," he continues. "Value for me is different; value is what you experience, the pleasure you have, the fun and the joy of these cars."

"A car from 1955 or 1975 drives the same way as a modern car; it is technically the same."

Starting in Mr. Burkard's garage, the group eventually converges in a single vehicle to travel through the scenic mountain views of Switzerland, the watchmaker's home turf. Inside the Mercury station wagon, Ellie-Blue Burkard's choice, Mr. Burkard, Emma-Sunshine Burkard and Mr. Schmid discuss the importance of an automobile's originality.



Mr. Burkhard's daughters add to the wide-ranging conversation. Image credit: A. Lange & Shne

"I feel an aura when I see those cars," Mr. Burkhard says.

"Originality is the only way you can have it," he continues. "After restoration, the car is not what it once was, somehow."

"If you have a 90-year-old car with its original leather, paint and everything else, you can just feel it; it makes a difference."

The group fears that once the older generations are gone, vintage vehicles, especially those from before the second World War will become dead to the world, as the coming generations come to forget how to maintain and drive them. Traveling back to "The Pearl Collection" garage, the four then discuss the topic's ties to the practice of horology.



The group congregates around a prized possession, one of the first Bugatti bikes. Image credit: A. Lange & Shne

"Once we got a pile of rust [sent to us], we had no idea what to look at," Mr. Schmid says in the film.

"In fact, it was the most complicated pocket watch [A. Lange & Shne] ever built," he muses. "In restoring it, it took 5,000 man-hours."

"It shows that there's a big difference between value and price."

Earlier this year, British automaker McLaren featured a campaign similar to this, spotlighting women in STEM fields through a discussion between a father and daughter ([see story](#)).

Mechanical connection

A. Lange & Shne isn't the first in its field in recent months to showcase its collaborative power with the automotive world.

British automaker Rolls-Royce and Swiss watchmaker Vacheron Constantin came together to design the custom-commissioned Rolls-Royce Amethyst Droptail, which featured a timepiece locked into the dashboard ([see story](#))

The horology label auctioned off a valuable timepiece during the event

In the film, and through its presence at the 2023 Concours of Elegance at Hampton Court Palace, A. Lange & Shne further establish the two industries' connection. The four people in the maison's video discussion agree that the small details of each release, whether a watch or a vehicle, enhance the overall experience.

They also agree that, mechanically, both trades require the same attention to detail that can't be found anywhere else in the world, luxury or otherwise.

"You look at these [cars] and you look at these watches and there is so much in common," Mr. Schmid says to close the film.

"It's the stories, it's the feeling," he continues. "I must admit, you can store many watches more easily than you can store many cars, which gives us a great advantage."

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