

CONNOISSEURSHIP OF THE CAR

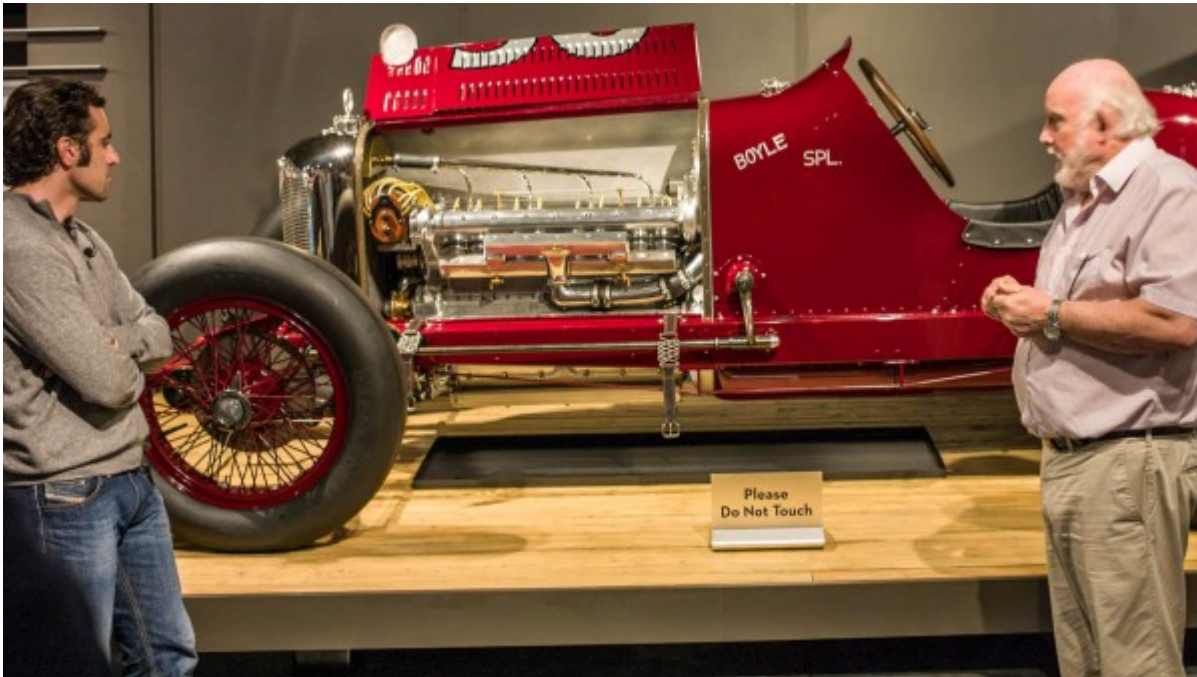


I am back from an extraordinary symposium at Miles Collier's Revs Institute in Florida, exploring the world of collectable cars at this end of an era. The engine note, the feedback through steering wheel from rubber tyre grip, the scent of warm motor oil, the conversation by the gas station on the road trip, will be history sooner than we anticipate.

This hobby, in this company of sixty of the most thoughtful of connoisseurs, is becoming automotive heritage – automotive archaeology. The future of the car will be the greatest case yet of the transformation into heritage of an aspect of our contemporary past.

Just what is a car? Artifactual form cannot contain this manifold of human experience, of modernity, of identity and aspiration, of global concern, of carbon politics. The car stands witness to the reality of Marcel Mauss's *total social fact*.

The car is a new kind of challenge to the museum and the archive. Its essence is surely to work, to operate, to be driven, but that cannot hold forever. Might we not preserve what may be lost – a key human experience of modernity? And how? How to run the past? Reenactment? Document? Let it go?



The remarkable cars of Briggs Cunningham and a Harry Miller racer with Dario Franchitti and Doug Nye – the great racing driver and one of the most engaging of storytellers



Miles Collier and I shared a conversation with symposium guests around the humble and the sublime, the shape of history and the most personal of connections with the automobile



With Dario Franchitti and car collector/driver/racer Nick Mason