



THE PETERSEN AUTOMOTIVE MUSEUM REOPENS

Written and photographed by: Ken Latka

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After a 14 month total transformation, the Petersen Automotive Museum located at 6060 Wilshire Boulevard in Los Angeles, California re-opens its doors to the public on Monday December 7, 2015.

The media was invited to a special sneak preview of the all new museum on Thursday December 3rd. Even though we saw renderings of what the museum would look like a year in advance, seeing the end result in person, exceeded all expectations.

The new "Pete" does impress. It feels more open, more airy and this has to be the most impressive display of vehicles I have seen at the museum since it opened in 1994. The layout, the displays, the lighting, everything lends itself to excellent viewing and photo opportunities.

We heard that the goal of the Board of Directors was to make the Petersen not just one of the best automotive museums in the United States, but one of the best in the world. I do believe they achieved that goal.

The new museum now has three full floors of content with 95,000 square feet of exhibit space. There are 25 new galleries, including a Grand Salon and Precious Metals Gallery that are world class. There is also a BMW Art Cars Gallery, a new motorcycle gallery, new Hollywood gallery, a new race car gallery, a new Hot Rod Gallery, and more.

Your visit should start on the third floor, where you will learn about the multi-faceted history of the automobile. "Concept Cars as Art" shows what the future looked like in the 1950s and 60s, while the Hollywood Gallery impresses you with vehicles used in television and motion picture productions, including a Batmobile, the Magnum P.I. 308 GTSI Ferrari, the Aston Martin and Jaguar CX75 from the latest 007 James Bond film "Spectre", the Pontiac Aztec from "Breaking Bad" and other fan favorites.

As you move down the spiral staircase to the second floor, you can explore the diversity of automotive design on the Industry Floor, where you will learn about the technology used to make vehicles faster and more efficient. You can even watch students from The Art Center College of Design sketch and mold the next generation of vehicle transport.

Also on the Industry floor is the "Pixar Cars Mechanical Institute" featuring a life-size Lightning McQueen. This entertaining gallery uses augmented reality technology to teach children of all ages how cars really work, starring their favorite characters from the Cars movies on electronic Carspad tablets.

One of the most stunning displays is the Precious Metal exhibit, which showcases some of the world's rarest and most exotic cars, all finished in silver. Just a few of the vehicles in this gallery include the 1959 Chevrolet Corvette XP-87 Stingray designed, driven and raced by GM President of Design Bill Mitchell, the 1964 Aston Martin DB5 driven by James Bond in the movie "Goldfinger", a stunning 1953 Fiat 8V Supersonic by Ghia, a 1957 Ferrari 625/250 Testa Rossa by Scaglietti, and a 1954 Mercedes-Benz W196 Streamliner driven by Juan-Manuel Fangio and Stirling Moss.

Also on the second floor is the Motorsports Gallery, featuring some of the fastest and most significant race cars of all time. This gallery is further enhanced with a 134-foot, 180-degree projection wall immersing visitors in the sights and sounds of these spectacular machines in motion on the track.

Directly behind the Motorsports exhibit is the Forza Motorsport Racing Experience, where fans can get behind the wheel of a variety of vehicles and try their hand at racing on ten driving rigs that are running the latest version of Microsoft's racing simulator.

The Hot Rod Gallery features some spectacular creations, including ZZ Top Front Man Billy Gibbons' "Cadzilla", Sam and George Barris' "Hirohata Mercury", the Doane Spencer Hot Rod owned by Bruce Meyer and many other important vehicles.

As you make your way to the first floor, visitors find themselves on the Peter and Merle Mullin Artistry Floor, where you will see some of the most beautifully designed vehicles of all time, often regarded as rolling sculpture. The Mullin Grand Salon features some of the finest coach built cars of the art deco era, from the 1936 Bugatti Type 57SC Atlantic to a 1936 Delahaye Type 165.

The last exhibit on the top to bottom floor tour of the museum is also the first one visitors see upon entering the museum, the BMW Art Cars Gallery. The BMW Art Car program was launched by French auctioneer/racer Hervé Poulain, who commissioned Alexander Calder to design the livery of a 1975 BMW 3.0 CSL. The car was campaigned at the 1975 24 Hours of Le Mans by Sam Posey, Jean Guichet and Hervé Poulain, and was one of Calder's last works. Also on display is the 1995 BMW 850 CSi designed by highly influential British artist David Hockney, who now lives a few miles from the Petersen, as well as the 2008 BMW Z4 used by South African artist Robin Rhode for the "Expression of Joy" project. A piece of the Expression of Joy canvas is displayed on the wall in the Hammer Foundation Gallery, as are images and information on all 17 BMW Art Cars, but there is so much more to see on all three floors of the new museum.

If you have been waiting for the Petersen to re-open, the wait is over, and I can say with confidence that you will not be disappointed.

TMPCC member Dave Kunz also did a piece for KABC-TV that you can watch [HERE](#)

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THE ROUND DOOR ROLLS IN THE LOBBY



THE BMW ART CAR GALLERY FIRST FLOOR



THE PIXAR CARS MECHANICAL INSTITUTE



1959 CHEVROLET CORVETTE XP-87



1957 FERRARI 625/250 TESTA ROSSA



THE MOTORSPORTS GALLERY



CADZILLA AND THE HIROHATA MERCURY



THE GRAND SALON ON THE FIRST FLOOR



1939 DELAHAYE TYPE 165



1936 BUGATTI TYPE 57SC ATLANTIC