



September 25, 2013, 6:00 am | [Comment](#)

# Do You Have Any Grey Poupon? Rolls-Royce and Bentley Owners Cruise Tuxedo Park

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About 30 vintage Rolls-Royce and Bentley automobiles descended on one of America's most exclusive private communities, Tuxedo Park, N.Y., for "Gates and Estates," an event held on Sunday. Sponsored by the Atlantic Region of the Rolls-Royce Owners' Club and hosted by Peter Regna, the noted car collector and entrepreneur, and his wife Barbara, the gathering took guests on a four-mile drive through "The Park" and featured walking tours of three luxurious homes along the way.

Before the start of the tour, Mr. Regna, credited with [inventing the inflatable and crashworthy fuel cell bladders](#) used in racecars and military vehicles (and the presidential limousine), offered guests a brief history of Tuxedo Park.

"Founded in 1886, The Park was in fact the first planned community in the United States," he said. "The criteria for purchasing a home back then was you had to spend a minimum of \$5,000 on your house, which was an enormous sum in 1886."



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As a result, a large number of mansions were built in Tuxedo Park before 1900; eventually the entire town was added to the National Register of Historic Places, Mr. Regna said.

The festivities kicked off with a formal luncheon at the Tuxedo Park Country Club, designed by the architect [John Russell Pope](#), who also designed the National Archives building and the Jefferson Memorial in Washington, D.C., among other landmarks. Guests dined on seared Chilean sea bass and other patrician delicacies, and although there was no Grey Poupon on hand to pass from Rolls to Rolls, some nameless fancy mustard made a less dramatic appearance in dainty saucers during the meal's second course.

After lunch, a quick stroll around the lot revealed a treasure trove of rare and distinctive British automobiles. Perhaps the most tantalizing of the bunch was a 1959 Bentley S1 Long-Wheelbase Limousine with coachwork by Hooper, owned by John Cory of Fort Lee, N.J. The car is just one of two left-hand-drive long wheelbase versions ever produced, according to Mr. Cory.

"These are the only cars ever made that overlapped the handmade era and the modern-car era," said Mr. Cory, who brought four cars to the event, including a 1959 Rolls-Royce Silver Wraith Limousine and a 1959 Rolls-Royce Silver Cloud I Drophead Coupe painted deep red, which was originally purchased by the businessman Harry Karl for his wife, Debbie Reynolds, he said.





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As the caravan headed for the first house on the tour, I was offered a seat in Hugh Heller's 1955 Hooper-bodied R-Type Bentley, which earlier in the day had been awarded the prize for Most Sensual Car. Mr. Heller, a real estate attorney in New York, likened driving the Bentley to "sitting atop a sculpture on wheels," though there was a bit of trouble with the sculpture's functionality. When I struggled to properly close the rear passenger door Mr. Heller, who owns several vintage British touring cars, instructed me to "give it a good, hard yank and she'll close shut."

After touring the palatial estate of the financier Tamer El-Rayess, the group returned to the open road. For the next leg of the journey I joined Scott and Deborah Ammarell, who gave me a ride in their 1927 Phantom I Rolls-Royce.

"I hope you don't mind the rumble seat!" Mr. Ammarell said, offering a helping hand as I attempted to lift myself into the rear of the car.

As we drove along the road that wound along the rim of Tuxedo Lake, Mrs. Ammarell shouted above the roar of the engine.

"Before we were married, Scott said that one day we were going to own a Rolls-Royce," she said, looking at her husband. "I never in my wildest dreams thought it would actually come true."



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Our second stop took us to the home of Michael Bruno, a Web entrepreneur who founded 1stdibs.com, an online retail destination for antiques, furniture, jewelry and real estate aimed at collectors and design aficionados. Mr. Bruno only recently began acquiring vintage automobiles, and said the event had been a fantastic experience.

“I love old houses and I love old cars,” Mr. Bruno said, adding that he was the proud owner of a newly restored 1963 Mercedes 220SE Cabriolet. “Peter Regna showed me a picture of the event from five years ago with all of the Rolls-Royces parked in front of a house and I said, ‘I’ll do it, if only for the opportunity to see all of those amazing cars in front of my house!’”

The tour’s final destination took guests to Mr. Regna’s expansive lakefront property, located less than a mile from Mr. Bruno’s house.

As the day came to a close and guests began to filter out, Mr. Regna, dressed in a perfectly tailored gray suit, said he was thankful drivers had successfully navigated the twisting roads of Tuxedo Park in their ancient cars. “Please be alert,” he had told drivers before the start of the tour. “And please go slowly, even if you have a Blower Bentley. And no drifting, thank you.”





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