

Masterpieces From the Régis Mathieu Collection

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11/07/2018 This summer, to celebrate 70 years of Porsche sports cars, the Cité de l'Automobile is inviting you to discover the incredible Régis Mathieu collection, which for almost thirty years has brought together exceptional models from the Stuttgart brand.

Régis Mathieu has stated that he needs beauty in order to live, which also explains his other area of interest: lighting. The director of Lustrerie Mathieu since 1992, a small family business that has now become a global company, Régis Mathieu knows everything about chandeliers. He has won international recognition for his restoration of chandeliers, which include those in the Opéra Garnier, the Hall of Mirrors at the Château de Versailles, the Philadelphia Opera House, and in many private and public chateaux.

But his enthusiasm is not only for the staging of light and shadow. Since childhood, Régis Mathieu has

been interested in vintage cars, and it was only when he was 17 that he was able to buy his first car with all his savings: a Beetle. Since then, his passion for cars has grown, and Régis Mathieu continues to add models to his unique collection: "I've discovered what being a collector means: the more you've got, the more you want!" And indeed, his collection of historical Porsche models is one of the most remarkable in France.

The automobile museum Cité de l'Automobile now brings Mathieu's two passions together - staged in a unique way: Porsche models such as a 904 GTS, a Carrera-Abarth or a Spyder are arranged under the light of impressive candlesticks. Hence, the exhibition 'Porsche : Chefs-d'oeuvre de la collection de Régis Mathieu' ('Porsche: Masterpieces From the Régis Mathieu Collection') will introduce visitors to a remarkable collector, a creator, and restorer of chandeliers, who believes that automobiles are works of art in their own right.

The exhibition is open from 12 July to 17 October.

Where do you get this passion for vintage cars, and especially Porsches?

I've always loved beautiful things. Even as a boy, I was absolutely fascinated by vintage cars. Like many boys of my age, I was mad about Porsche 911s. The Porsche was the symbol of success and speed. But what I also like is the brand's unpretentious side. I also like Beetles, a car that I saw as economical, reliable, popular, and aesthetic. So I had two passions: Beetles and 911s. Then I discovered the 356 and it was a revelation: this model is the link between the Beetles and the 911. Straight away I wanted to drive a 356 every day! I love its minimalist side: it's fast and efficient, but unpretentious.

How did you manage to purchase your first collection car when you were only seventeen?

It was at the end of the 1980s that I bought my fist vintage car: a 1972 Beetle. At the time, the car wasn't really seen as a collector's car but it's always been a timeless model. I spent all my savings! Then I renovated and repainted it with the help of my friends, and I managed to sell it. I then bought another two cars, which I resold to purchase a splendid convertible, like the one in the exhibition. I did OK and that's how at the age of twenty-one I already owned a Speedster 356 and a RS 2.7 L, even though I'd spent very little.

In your opinion, which are the most emblematic Porsche cars, and which car in your collection are you most proud of?

I'm very proud of the 904 GTS from 1964, which I managed to buy at the time with only 1,813 km on the clock. A real gem! Of course, the 911 is Porsche's emblematic model, and I'm very proud to own the very same 911 that belonged to Ferry Porsche and which featured on all the posters in those days. But my favourite car in the collection is the 356: I've had it since my twenties and I've never parted company with it. This car has witnessed all the main events in my life, from my studies to my marriage and my family—and I still race it. For me, it truly symbolises the Porsche spirit. If anyone asks me which model I'd keep if I had to part company with all the rest, I always tell them: the 356.

Link Collection

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