

【Program #2】

What is the popularity of vintage Japanese cars overseas?

10:50 - 11:55
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Facilitator

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Speaker 1

Derek E. Moore
Lane Motor Museum

Speaker 2

Jon Murden
National Motor Museum

Why are Japanese cars from the 80s and 90s so popular in Europe/the U.S. today?

Speaker : Derek E. Moore (Lane Motor Museum)

Since their initial introduction to the United States market in the late 1950s, Japanese automobiles have garnered increasing interest, particularly since the 1970s. However, a notable surge in enthusiasm for Japanese cars from the 1980s and 1990s has emerged within US car culture over the past two decades. This paper delves into the factors contributing to this heightened popularity through a multifaceted approach. It synthesizes recent research, conducts surveys and interviews with select Japanese car owners in the US, and scrutinizes the burgeoning trend of import-only car shows across the nation. Analysis reveals that the ascendancy of Japanese cars can be attributed to their resonance within pop culture, their renowned quality, and the distinctive characteristics of vehicles from this era. The findings suggest a continued upward trajectory in the popularity of Japanese automobiles within the US, indicating a growing fascination with other decades of Japanese automobiles, as well.

Japanese Classic Car Culture in the UK: A New Chapter for its Motor Museums?

Speaker : Jon Murden (National Motor Museum)

As the heritage vehicle movement became established in the UK in the middle decades of the twentieth century, first generation motoring enthusiasts naturally tended to focus on the marques they had nostalgia for, and longed to own in their youth. This, inevitably, gave British motor museums a very Eurocentric character.

But since the 1970s, Japanese manufacturers have played an increasingly large part in the lives of British car and motorcycle owners, going as far in the 1980s as to supplant the domestically owned companies as the backbone of UK-based vehicle making.

Now in the 2020s, as the generation that grew up at that time are becoming a more and more significant proportion of the heritage vehicle movement, their familiarity with, affinity for, and love towards, Japanese vehicles is transforming the classic scene in Britain. This interpretation of Japanese automotive culture, from the drifting scene to lively car and bike meets, is a captivating and vibrant phenomenon that has a unique blend of innovation, style, and action.

How motor museums in the UK embrace, reflect and interpret this growing passion for Japanese vehicles represents both an important challenge to the orthodoxy of their collections and interpretation, and a wonderful opportunity to tell new stories, stage new events, and attract new audiences.