

Get to Know Barrett-Jackson's Craig Jackson

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In 1995, car collector extraordinaire, Brian Jackson, fell ill and, within months, had passed away. His 35-year-old brother, Craig, had two choices: To let the empire his late dad and older brother established and nurtured with Tom Barrett, who had retired in 1997 and passed away in 2004, continue its course on autopilot, or to steer the future of Barrett-Jackson car auctions in a new direction. Through Jackson's role as chairman and CEO, Barrett-Jackson has risen from the niche car collector's industry and staked claim as the greatest car collector's auction in the world. (There are four annual auctions: Scottsdale, Las Vegas, Orange County and Palm Beach.)

His talent for restoring and collecting cars ran in his veins from an early age, though this career path was unexpected. "Growing up, I didn't think this is what I would do for a living; it just sort of evolved," Jackson says. "In high school, I took construction and grafting; I wanted to be a builder. It wasn't until I went to college and took automotive technology and got a degree in automotive [technology] that I realized how I had a real knack for this."

Just like his father and brother taught him, Jackson continues to pass on his love and knowledge of automobiles to his children. "Whether my children use it or not or decide to carry on the business will be up to them, although my daughter does seem to really like the business [she is currently studying business at Arizona State University]."

Jackson's hope to keep the esteemed car auction in the family runs parallel to his dream to keep Barrett-Jackson based in Arizona. "I love this state," Jackson says. "We go up to the Grand Canyon and Lake Powell. There're just so many things to see here, I love it."

At this month's highly anticipated Barrett-Jackson at Westworld—which Jackson says will be "the greatest car shows ever put together, as well as an auction"—guests can expect the iconic original Batmobile Ford Lincoln Futura, three years in the making with owner George Barris, and the planet's rarest Shelby—Jackson's own 1968 Green Hornet. "We've never had a lineup like this in our 42-year history," Jackson says. "This year will have the greatest selection of cars we've ever had."

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Barrett-Jackson 2013 takes place Jan. 13-20 at Scottsdale's Westworld. www.barrett-jackson.com.