

Barrett-Jackson: A Road to Remember

Written by Nichole Brophy

As Barrett-Jackson's 2011 event schedule gets underway, the auction company's yearlong 40th anniversary celebration will also kick off in Scottsdale. Barrett-Jackson's impact and successes through the decades have contributed to this 40-year milestone. Here, we examine the triumphant timeline that has grown this local gem into an internationally respected event with auctions nationwide.



Barrett-Jackson formed from the fateful meeting of Tom Barrett and Russ Jackson. "They were from this area," says Steve Davis, president of Barrett-Jackson. "Tom met Russ through an ad in the paper actually selling a car. Ironically, they never consummated a sale but they did develop a friendship and, ultimately, a partnership."

1967

Barrett and Jackson present a car show called "Fiesta de los Autos Elegantes" at the Scottsdale Ball Park. At the show's core was a fund-raiser for local charities, including the Scottsdale Library. "The roots of Barrett-Jackson go back to helping the community," Davis says. "I think it all started at the first Barrett-Jackson car show, which raised money for the local library at the time. As the company has grown, we can not only generate and potentially raise money to help the community, but also provide awareness with millions of people watching from the auctions and live broadcasts."

1971

The first Barrett-Jackson Classic Car Auction was at the Safari Resort in Scottsdale and featured vehicles from both founders' individual collections. Of particular interest was Barrett's Mercedes 770 Phaeton, which captured headlines when it sold for \$153,000. The sale and the inaugural event drew 3,000 car enthusiasts and thrust the Barrett-Jackson name into international prominence.

1989

Barrett-Jackson relocated the auction to its current location at WestWorld in Scottsdale. The increase in space also parlayed into additional patrons as attendance reached 50,000 plus.

1993

Founder Russ Jackson passed away leaving his sons, Craig and Brian, to head up the company. Two short years later, following a battle with cancer, Brian also passed, leaving Craig to oversee the company and lead it forward. "It was a major deal as you can imagine from the trauma and terrible loss," Davis says. "There were a lot of things that needed to be done to deal with the loss of family and also to make sure the company was on firm footing and going in a direction to become what it has become today."

1995

Barrett-Jackson introduced Internet coverage of the auction. "We were a pioneer when we reached out and did what we did on the Internet," says Davis, who is quick to note that since its inception, the company's online presence has grown by leaps and bounds. "An analogy would be going from a stone wheel that got the job done to the incredible high-tech radio speed-rated tires that we have on our cars. Today, we are on the cutting edge of technology and our Web site has become one of the top Web sites in the world."

The company's current online menu of services includes online bidding, social network connections, live streaming of auctions around the nation as well as a database of information for car collectors and enthusiasts. "We are really engaged with apps for iPhones and Droids," Davis says. "Barrett-Jackson is really engaging and uses electronic media in a way that makes the company just a touch away from anyone wanting information when we aren't having an event."

1997

The Speedvision Network produced live coverage of the Barrett-Jackson Classic Car Auction. (The event was the first-ever collector car auction to be televised live.) As Barrett-Jackson has grown, so has its TV presence. "We are partnering with Speed TV for an unprecedented 40 hours of live broadcast from the Barrett-Jackson event in Scottsdale," Davis says.

2001

Proving that classic cars are not just big boy toys, Barrett-Jackson joined forces with toy manufacturer Mattel Inc. and released a line of Matchbox Collectibles. The line features models of collectible cars that have crossed the auction block over the years at the Barrett-Jackson event.

2003

Barrett-Jackson introduces its second auction location with an inaugural auction in Palm Beach, Fla.

2008

Barrett-Jackson drives into Sin City and puts down roots at Mandalay Bay to establish the third location of the famed classic car auction. "We have incredible venues," Davis says. "Scottsdale is our mothership, but Vegas is magic. Vegas is just 24/7; it's the same electricity, passion, expectations and all of the things that get your juices flowing that make it a natural attraction for Barrett-Jackson. People are drawn to the aspect of rolling the dice, metaphorically speaking, against the guy bidding across the room."

The inaugural Vegas auction attracted more than 50,000 visitors and reached a sales volume of more than \$29 million. The star of the Las Vegas auction was Carroll Shelby's first road race car, a 1949 MG TC, that fetched \$313,500.

2010

Defying the state of the economy, Barrett-Jackson's successful formula was once again showcased at the inaugural Orange County auction, which became the company's fourth annual location. The auction generated more than \$15 million in car sales with \$1 million raised for charities. The top seller was a 1970 Chevrolet Chevelle SS 454 convertible that sold for \$253,000.



The 2011 Barrett-Jackson Collector Car Auction

When: Jan. 17-23, 2011

Where: WestWorld of Scottsdale

To Learn More: www.barrett-jackson.com

For the Barrett-Jackson Auction Company, having only one 40th anniversary bash will simply not do. So the company is extending the celebration for an entire year. "It'll be a yearlong celebration that'll give attendees from all four of our events around the nation a chance to celebrate our 40 years of growth," says Steve Davis, president of Barrett-Jackson. For the anniversary, the Scottsdale event will unveil four vehicles from the Barrett-Jackson collection that will tour with the auction and be sold at the Las Vegas grand finale celebration later this year. The four 1971 automobiles represent the first year of Barrett-Jackson and will include a Ford product, a General Motors product, a Chrysler product and a European sports car to represent each of the areas of collecting that Barrett-Jackson is known for.

In addition, the auction promises fun for the entire family including a cruise-in, the second annual road rally, an opening night party and a family value day. "This is going to be a great party for everybody to come on out and have a great time," Davis says. "And while you are here you might look at a car, but you can also party to the max the entire time and not even look at a car. That is what makes it magic."