



SPECIAL FEATURE

Cayman Motor Museum



FEATURE





CAYMAN MOTOR MUSEUM:

A Tour de Force for Cayman

By David R. Legge

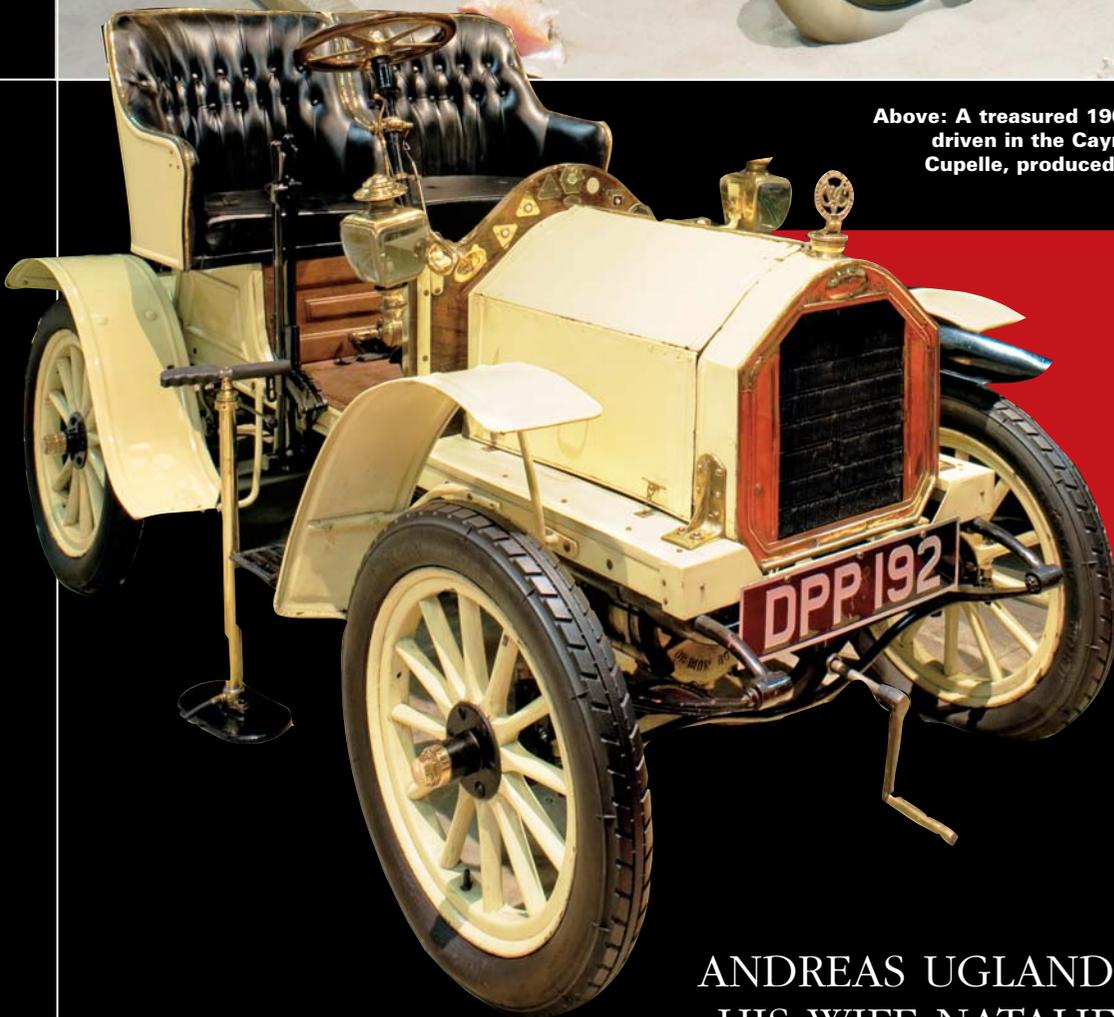


PHOTO CREDIT



PHOTOS BY COURTNEY PLATT

Above: A treasured 1905 Cadillac, the first automobile ever driven in the Cayman Islands. Below: An elegant 1905 Cupelle, produced by Cupelle Motors of Knightsbridge.



ANDREAS UGLAND, ALONG WITH HIS WIFE NATALIE, CONCEIVED, DESIGNED, AND FINANCED THE MUSEUM— A GIFT REALLY TO THE PEOPLE OF THE CAYMAN ISLANDS.

Let's take a tour of Grand Cayman's newest and grandest attraction, the Cayman Motor Museum. This will be a very special tour because our guide is none other than Andreas Ugland, who, along with his wife Natalie, conceived, designed, and financed the museum—a gift really to the people of the Cayman Islands.

The project began more than a decade ago when Andreas was able to purchase a prime plot of land on North West Point Road, close to Boatswain's Beach, in anticipation of building his Motor Museum.

Ever since he was a teenager, Andreas has been acquiring and tinkering with fast cars, which nicely complemented his penchant for fast boats (the Ugland Offshore Racing Team, with Andreas himself at the controls, has held a number of world speed records), but an issue developed for Andreas that few of us will ever have to encounter.

PHOTO BY DAVID R. LEGGE



THE MUSEUM CONTAINS 80 VEHICLES AND PROVIDES A HISTORICAL RETROSPECTIVE OF MOTORING THROUGHOUT THE WORLD.

The Honorable McKeeva Bush, Premier of the Cayman Islands, officially opens the Cayman Motor Museum as owners Andreas and Natalie Ugland look on.

His collection of motorcars and motorcycles had outgrown any single location to store them, to enjoy them, or to share them. They were scattered around his home country of Norway, many were in England, and others were housed in Canada and Cayman. Things, as Andreas would admit, were getting a bit out of hand.

Plus, he continued to buy more (and more exotic) cars. He explains: "When you have this bug, it's absolutely impossible to let it go. I try to restrain myself, but it's quite

hard. It's like buying jewelry for the ladies. It's never ending. Enough is never enough."

By 2004, plans were in place and all lights were green to begin building the museum—that is until the unwelcome arrival of Hurricane Ivan and the destruction of much of the island.

Plans were put on hold, but never abandoned. In fact, during this hiatus, the vision became even more grand, expansive, and yes, expensive. In 2006, architect Donal McGrath began working on a new

set of drawings to encompass the 12,000 square foot facility. After planning approvals were secured, McAlpine, the general contractor, along with more than 40 subcontractors and service providers, got to work in earnest to build the museum.

Leading up to the opening in early May of this year, Andreas had packaged up and shipped dozens of vehicles to the island. With a couple of exceptions, they arrived without dings or dents, but there was still the minor task of transporting them from



the downtown dock to the museum itself.

“Because we don’t have large car transporters here like we do in Europe or the United States, they had to be taken one by one,” he explained. Some of his friends, including architect McGrath, got the drive of their lives by shuttling the priceless vehicles to the museum. Police Commissioner David Baines, along with his father in the passenger seat, got behind the wheel of a yellow 328 GTS Ferrari, never exceeding (or so he says) the 40 mile per hour speed limit along West Bay Road.

The museum itself is stunning. If Donal McGrath can be thought of as the “exterior

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architect,” Natalie Uglund gets the “interior architect” honors.

The museum contains 80 vehicles (it still isn’t large enough to house the entire Uglund collection) and provides a historical retrospective of motoring throughout the world—beginning with the very first automobile ever manufactured, an 1886 Benz. An exact model of the first vehicle ever to be driven in the Cayman Islands—a 1905 Cadillac—has a place of special prominence in the museum.

Of particular interest to children (and “adult children”) is the ultimate crime-fighting vehicle, the original “Batmobile” that squired Batman and Robin around Gotham in the 1960s television show. An exact replica of the “Batcycle” is also on display.





PHOTOS BY COURTNEY PLATT

The magnificent "Yellow Rolls-Royce," as seen in the 1964 movie of the same name which starred Rex Harrison, Ingrid Bergman, Shirley MacLaine, and Omar Sharif.

Moviegoers will recognize the 1920 Yellow Rolls-Royce that appeared in the film of the same name, and "royal watchers" will be attracted to Queen Elizabeth II's 1956 Daimler DK400 limousine.

Racing and speed aficionados will seek out the sleek Ferraris (nearly a dozen classics, most of them red), Maseratis, Corvettes, and Jaguars. (Governor Duncan Taylor confided that his favorite among the collection is a classic C-type Jaguar, painted "British racing green," of course.)

Others might marvel at the magnificent Rolls-Royces (including a 1930 Phantom) and Bentleys (including Sir Elton John's 1963 classic).

Asked to identify his own favorites, Andreas was both coy and noncommittal, suggesting that "all are special for different special occasions."

This reporter, however, persisted and asked, "but if you HAD to identify two or three, which would they be?" He conceded that two Ferraris and one Rolls-Royce were exceptional.

"The 1963 Ferrari 250 Lusso is very beautiful to look at. It has a

sweet small v12 engine, and the sound is nice, very soft." (Rock star Eric Clapton and actor Steve McQueen apparently agreed. They each owned one.)

Andreas also has special affection for his 1979 Ferrari 512 Boxer which he drove for many years throughout Europe. "This is a real sports car. The engine sits in the back and produces a deep rich roar. It's also very fast."

In fact, it's probably the fastest car in the collection, capable of speeds in excess of 300 kilometers (approximately 190 miles) per hour. Andreas concedes that he's "had it up there," but like Commissioner Baines, "not on West Bay Road." The German Autobahn was Andreas's speedway of choice.

A 1949 Rolls-Royce Silver Wraith rounded out Andreas's trilogy of favorites. "I bought it from a gentleman in Kent in England; it is very comfortable, and it has never failed. If I kept driving it, I don't imagine it would fail for another 50 years!"

When acquiring a valuable automobile, Andreas explained, "it's important to know what they are

worth so you can seek out those that might be undervalued." He is an avid reader of classic motorcar magazines and, of course, the Internet has also become a good source.

"I try not to buy cars that need extensive restoration because even for a not-too-expensive automobile, you can quickly end up with a bill for \$100,000 or more." In some instances, parts for classic vehicles may need to be re-manufactured from scratch which, of course, can be a very costly process.

Normally Andreas prefers to see first-hand a vehicle he's interested in—and maybe even try it out—before he purchases it. "I know so many people, and they know that I am not coming for a joyride, so normally I get my wish. I'll often bring along a mechanic as well; that's the best way to do it."

He also has purchased many vehicles from auction houses. While unable usually to road-test those cars, he said the reputable houses know him well and go through the vehicles very thoroughly before recommending them. "They are normally very



PHOTO BY COURTNEY PLATT

The original “Batmobile” from the 1960s television show is now permanently parked in the museum (although it runs just fine). An exact replica of the “Batcycle” completes the themed display.

honest about the condition of the car, and they describe it in detail for me. It’s worked very well.”

In addition to the collection of motor vehicles, the museum offers an educational journey into Cayman’s cultural past through the magnificent paintings, archival photographs, and local artifacts on display throughout. An authentic Cayman catboat is mounted among other memorabilia on the walls, and an old-fashioned Cayman-style cottage has been constructed on site.

An exhibit of a vintage 1950s-style diner, complete with a jukebox, has been incorporated into the main showroom. A gift shop offers unique auto memorabilia and souvenirs.

The Uglands will tell you that they never conceived the Motor

Museum as a money-making venture (“I’m sure we could use our money more efficiently,” said Andreas.) But he concedes he could not spend his money more enjoyably: “These classic motorcars should never be kept hidden away in garages or warehouses. It’s my pleasure to share them with people who I am sure will appreciate their magnificence.”

With the opening of the Cayman Motor Museum, a loose association of business owners has been meeting to consider developing the Turtle Farm area of West Bay into a tourist destination unto itself.

Already in place, along with the Motor Museum, are Boatswain’s Beach, Dolphin Discovery, the Cracked Conch restaurant, and a

Tortuga Rum Company store. Other quality retailers are considering opening outlets, and a boutique hotel is a possibility. A privately owned water ferry, which would transport cruise ship passengers from downtown George Town, is also being contemplated.

The Cayman Motor Museum is open to the public—the entry fee is nominal—from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday, and 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Sunday. The premises can also be reserved for private functions, with full catering services available from the Cracked Conch restaurant across the street.

For more information, either visit the museum’s website at www.caymanmotormuseum.com or call 345-947-7741. 

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Cayman Motor Museum

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Also available for private functions.

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We would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Mr. and Mrs. Ugland for creating such a wonderful museum. We would also like to thank the staff of McAlpine and BDCL, as well as Mike Dukelow, for their hard work during the construction process. Our best wishes for continued success as it is a truly unique addition to the Cayman Islands!



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Scotiabank & Trust (Cayman) Ltd. would like to congratulate Andreas and Natalie Ugland on the opening of the Cayman Motor Museum, and to wish them the best of success in this venture.

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We extend our congratulations and best wishes to the Cayman Motor Museum on their Grand Opening.

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We are proud to have provided Custom Brokerage Services for this project and we certainly enjoyed the opportunity to participate in making this dream come true.

—Jennifer Kaufman

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