Ayrburn Classic: Where the mountains meet the marque

09/09/2026 New Zealand's Ayrburn Classic is writing its own chapter in the world of great motoring events — with world-class hospitality, gardens and scenery at its heart.

New Zealand's Ayrburn Classic is more than a car lover's delight. Anyone whose bucket list includes the Goodwood Festival of Speed or the Concours d'Elegance showcases at Amelia Island or Pebble Beach should grab a pen now and add this event.

Billed as a festival of motoring, the Ayrburn Classic is a celebration of automotive heritage, innovation and hospitality. This annual event celebrated its second year in February and has quickly cemented its place alongside the northern hemisphere's most exalted collector car gatherings.

Last year's International Historic Motoring Awards in London confirmed this when it listed the Ayrburn Classic as a finalist for its Breakthrough Event of the Year award. With attendance quadrupling to more than 9,000 in just two years, it's no surprise.

Part of this event's appeal is its visually spectacular location. The magnificent Ayrburn precinct in Arrowtown, just outside Queenstown, is a food and wine playground that attracts around a million guests each year, and for good reasons. Its world-class bars and restaurants, manicured gardens, pristine ponds, and sweeping mountain range backdrop make it the perfect location for a festival of motoring equal to those at Pebble Beach and Goodwood.

Then there are the cars. The Ayrburn Classic attracts a jaw-dropping roll call of collectible motors. This three-day event is a smorgasbord of European thoroughbreds, American muscle, famous racers and even aeroplane-engined vintage cars that shake the earth when started. This year's displays and judging involved around 500 special vehicles in various classes.

The event's programme began on Friday with the Tour d'Elegance charity drive through the Wakatipu Basin, which was followed by the event's welcome cocktail party. Saturday ushered in the public to enjoy the two-day motoring showcase, which included a number of demonstrations and unveilings of extensive restoration projects as well as never-before-seen vehicles. There was even a Crackle Off for the crowds to enjoy the mechanical symphony of the cars on display.

Saturday afternoon's Ayrburn Classic Live Auction saw around 40 cars go under the hammer. Sunday included a Fashions on the Field event, and six women presented their cars on the Dell – one of the event's central display locations – where they discussed their automotive passion in front of thousands of guests.

The all-important Ayrburn Classic Awards Ceremony headlined the final afternoon, with John and Amber Bellamore's stunning red 1957 Ferrari Monza 750 claiming the Best in Show Award 2026. Porsche comprised many of the event's headline cars this year. Among the stand-outs were a 911 (Type 996) GT2 Clubsport and GT3 RS, a 356 A Outlaw, a Carrera GT and a rare 918 Spyder, all of them irresistible to three days of crowds.

"Few marques bridge generations so effortlessly as Porsche," said Jonathan Paape, Chief Car Curator at the Ayrburn Classic. "The Carrera GT stirred childlike wonder in so many people and this year's Porsche contingent commanded a powerful presence."

The marque also carries a deeply personal significance for Jonathan. His father brought home the tenth Porsche to arrive in New Zealand. His wife drove the eighth 356 to reach our shores. Together, they are a living thread of Porsche history in the southern hemisphere, which accounts for the brand's strong presence at Ayrburn.

The Ayrburn Classic is a name to remember for Porsche enthusiasts and classic car lovers worldwide. This event, set in the heart of the South Island's spectacular natural scenery and built on genuine passion, is fast becoming one of the classic motoring world's top-tier festivals, and a compelling reason to visit New Zealand.

Info

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Consumption data

911 GT3 (WLTP)*: Fuel consumption combined: 13.8 – 13.7 l/100 km; CO_2 emissions combined: 312 – 310 g/km; CO_2 class: G

911 Spirit 70 (WLTP)*: Fuel consumption combined: 10.6 – 10.4 l/100 km; CO_2 emissions combined: 240 – 236 g/km; CO_2 class: G

911 Carrera S (Predecessor model)

911 Turbo (Predecessor model)

*Further information on the official fuel consumption and the official specific CO_2 emissions of new passenger cars can be found in the "Leitfaden über den Kraftstoffverbrauch, die CO_2-Emissionen und den Stromverbrauch neuer Personenkraftwagen" (Fuel Consumption, CO_2Emissions and Electricity Consumption Guide for New Passenger Cars), which is available free of charge at all sales outlets and from DAT (Deutsche Automobil Treuhand GmbH, Helmuth-Hirth-Str. 1, 73760 Ostfildern-Scharnhausen, www.dat.de).

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