

Design Contest Champions Envision Chrysler's Future

by Irena Granaas

A glimpse of the future of Chrysler's automotive design presented itself during the 2013 Detroit Autorama, and it's a very promising one.

Finalists among Detroit High school students competing in the Autorama High School Design competition presented their entries. Contestants were asked to create their own design for a future luxury Chrysler vehicle, showing that would hit dealer showrooms in the year 2030.

Entries were evaluated by a panel of judges from Chrysler, the College for Creative Studies, which collaborated with Chrysler on the competition, and Detroit Autorama. The contest was launched to benefit United Way for Southeastern Michigan.

Eight students, a first- and second-place winner from each grade from 9 to 12, were named winners and received not only acclaim from the judging panel, but some valuable awards and prizes.

First-place winners were Andrew Stinson, grade 12, Cass Technical High School; Michael Martinez, grade 11, Randolph Career & Technical Center; Lawrence Johnson, grade 10, Davis Aerospace High School; and Howa Rahman, grade nine, Detroit International Academy for Young Women.

Earning distinction with second-place honors were Charity Pinchum, grade 12, Cass Technical High School; Erik Barnes, grade 11, Randolph Career & Technical Center; Qujuan Brummitt, grade 10, Southeastern High School of Technology and Law; and Mushtary Chowdhury, grade 9, Benjamin Carson High School for Science and Medicine.

Mark Trostle, head of SRT, Mopar and Motorsports Design for Chrysler, was part of the judging panel and spoke in an interview about the winners and their design concepts.

Stinson will receive a \$5,000 scholarship to CCS, provided he is accepted by the school. All first and second place winners received an iPad, a sketchbook, drawing materials as well as the opportunity to attend a summer design class at CCS specifically geared toward transportation design, which will be taught by CCS instructors.

Trostle said Stinson's car de-

sign "had the most Chrysler flavor."

Stinson provided three different views of his car, which showed a good grasp of perspective, and drew in a lot of details, said Trostle.

Commenting on Martinez' work, Trostle said Martinez' entry was one of the strongest ones in the competition.

"His concept for the drawing was probably the most expressive and far-reaching if you were looking for an automotive design."

Trostle said Martinez incorporated a little of the "Spirit of Detroit" into his design and in the background as well.

"He was thinking about what the car would look like in a front view and a rear view as well. That's why he shows a lot of potential," Trostle said, adding that he encouraged Martinez to continue drawing and to enter the Autorama design contest next year, with a chance to win it.

"We showed him a potential career that he obviously wasn't aware of, and he obviously has some talent there as well, and could become quite successful at it," he explained.

Trostle said Lawrence Johnson's entry was very expressive, and "broke the mold of what a normal car would look like but it was still an automobile," which was inspired by an open-top roadster.

Ninth-grader Howa Rahman was the only girl garnering a first place ranking. Trostle commented, "She definitely pushed the envelope of what we think of as a four-wheeled vehicle" with a circular design which was very futuristic.

She also demonstrated an understanding of perspective, a key element judges looked for in selecting the winners.

Trostle had good things to say about all the winners and their poster entries, and added that Chrysler hopes to benefit in the end from encouraging these young artists.

"Not to discredit the 12th graders, but what's great, too, about some of the ninth, 10th, 11th graders is we've really exposed them to something I don't think they were aware of existed, especially having CCS in their backyard, as probably one of the best design schools in the world if not in the country," he said.

Ridler Award Winners Star at Autorama

A 1940 Ford Coupe with a unique, three-stage paint job left behind rivals from the most competitive field ever at the 2013 Autorama at Cobo Center to win the coveted Ridler Award at the Meguiar's Detroit Autorama.

Dubbed "Checkered Past," the vintage Ford, owned by Ron and Deb Cizek of Bennington, Neb., triumphed out of a field of seven nearly equally spectacular custom vehicle runners-up to be named the winner of the Ridler Award, sponsored by Chevy Performance.

"His vehicle certainly was an eye-grabber," commented Pete Toundas, president of Champion Auto Shows, producer of Autorama, noting the 2013 contest was tough on the judges because all the 'Pirelli Great 8' cars competing for the Ridler Award were very close in terms of their fit, finish and quality.

The Cizek entry won out in the end thanks to its flawless body work, "spectacular" execution, three-stage paint job and Blown Ford Flathead. The car was built by Andy Leach of Cal Automotive in Omaha.

"The gold highlights with the burgundy paint job made it just an unbelievably beautiful car," Toundas added.

"There was quite a buzz in the hallways about the car because of the number of modifications on it ... It had a real elegant quality about it," commented Autorama Spokeswoman Linda Ashley.

"There was certainly no unanimous winner from the beginning," Toundas said. "It was the judges going at each car thoroughly, and finding out all of the pluses and minuses."

The Ridler Award is named in honor of Don Ridler, who was the first professional promoter of Detroit Autorama, and is given to the best custom 'rod in the coun-



2013 Ridler Award winner "Checkered Past"

try, shown for the first time at Autorama. The March 8-10 event at Cobo was also a celebration of all 50 past Ridler winners. According to Ashley, 25 of the 50 previous winners came to the event.

Although at press time a final count was not available, Ashley said attendance at this year's Autorama appeared to be somewhat improved over last year's figure of 150,000, likely because of the draw of being able to see many of the past Ridler Award-winning vehicles gathered in one place.

"People loved the opportunity to see the Ridler Award winners ... You could sense the enthusiasm," she said.

The chance to see the Ridler winners also raised the competitive stakes, with many more automobiles qualifying for this year's show because owners wanted to take part in the award's 50th anniversary.

"It was certainly the best of the best," Toundas said. "People came out to compete for the 50th anniversary of the Ridler Award. It just had excitement in the air this year, not only with the cars, but

with the celebrities, features, packages, the Batmobiles ... You couldn't have made it a more perfect event for a car enthusiast."

The competition was truly national this year, with the Pirelli Great 8 finalists representing eight states. In addition to Cizek's winning Ford Coupe, other finalists were a 1956 Chevy pickup owned by Alan Beers of Owassa, Okla.; a 1934 Ford owned by Christian Harker of Blaine, Minn.; a 1935 Ford Phaeton owned by John Mayer of Berwyn, Ill.; a 1934 Ford owned by Ken Serenson of Sedona, Ariz.; a 1972 Chevy pickup owned by Buddy Schutz of Washington, Texas; a 1956 Buick Special owned by Mark Williams of Davenport, Iowa; and a 1965 Chevy Corvette owned by Allan Woodall of Cary, N.C.

Among awards going to Michigan owners, Best Restored honors went to John Kryta of Romeo for his 1969 Pontiac GTO convertible. Kryta also took home the Outstanding Restored award for his 1970 Oldsmobile 442.

Doug Wright of Waterford earned "Outstanding Competition" honors for his 1964 Plymouth Belvedere.

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