

Avanti

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**Joe Granatelli's
Cadillac Powered Avanti**



Studebaker Muscle Returned to the Windy (and Chilly) City

The Muscle Car and Corvette National Show is the premier show of its kind.

It excels at its core mission of exhibiting simply the best of the best of the best of muscle cars of any era. This year's edition was held on November 18 and 19, 2022 at the Donald E. Stephens Convention Center in Rosemont, Illinois.

On special display this year were 11 Plymouth Super Birds as well as 11 Dodge Daytona winged warrior vehicles. A most impressive sight and extremely rare gathering of the flocks.

The show again reached a new level exhibitors with a cross section of Shelys, Camaros, Corvettes and rare exotic muscle cars as well as a display of Corvair Lakewood Station Wagons.

Literally something for everyone.

Of particular interest to Studebaker high performance vehicle enthusiasts is the Studebaker Legends Exhibit—a feature at each years show.

The indomitable Ed George and crew continues year after year to raise the Studebaker Legend exhibit at the MCACN to new heights.

This year Excalibur number one was on display—the only Excalibur powered with an Avanti R2 engine.

This vehicle, known as a 1963 Studebaker SS, is Brooks Stevens' first prototype of what became the Excalibur. It began as a Studebaker concept created for the New York International Auto Show “to attract people to the stand.”

Reaction was enthusiastic, and Stevens quickly began production of the neoclassic, though with a Chevrolet small-block.

Also featured for the 2022 event was Studebaker Avanti 63R-1001 on loan to the Studebaker National Museum since July's Copshaholm Concours. It made a weekend stop at MCACN



in Rosemont, Illinois on its journey back to the LeMay—America's Car Museum in Tacoma, Washington.

Longtime Bonneville racer Jim Lange brought his 1963 Avanti land speed car to the show, offering visitors the opportunity to get up close with the rarely exhibited fuel injected and turbo-



Story and photos by John Hull
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charge salt flat racer.

Lange's Bonneville Avanti holds a class record of just over 228 mph.

The 1963 Avanti (below right) is the 16th one produced, serial number 63R-1016, but its significance lies with its equipment and subsequent history.

Originally built with the R2 engine, it was subsequently shipped to Paxton Products and converted to an R3, then a supercharged 299—the class limit at Bonneville at the time—but by the time the engine reached production, it measured 304.5cid and put out 335 horsepower.

Both *Motor Trend* and *Hot Rod* magazines tested this very vehicle, upon which Paxton sold it with an R4 engine to its first owner in December 1963. It eventually ended up in South Bend where it resided until recently acquired by member Nelson Bove.

Bove has plans to repaint the body, restore the interior and put the engine back in the car, but leaving the patina and underhood modifications as were done by Paxton and the Granatellis.

You will not find a finer exhibit of rare and interesting Studebakers anywhere else on the planet.

The MCCAN show should be on everyone's bucket list as a must see destination in their lifetime. It's that good I guarantee it.

