

The Fine Art of the Pre-War Automobile With Expert Evan Ide '01

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In August, when a 1962 Ferrari 250 GTO once owned by an Olympic gold medal skier sold at auction for a record-breaking \$34.6 million, Evan Ide '01 was the one who drove the car on the stage for viewing.

Earlier this month, Ide was on campus in Durham to give a talk on the automobile maker Ettore Bugatti and the influence Bugatti's artistic background had on the design of his spectacular sports cars.

So, yes, Ide knows cars. And what he knows, the Hampton Falls native says, has roots in the fine arts degree he got at UNH and the experience he gained through two fellowships at the university's Museum of Art.

"I use my art degree every day," says Ide, who is an automobile specialist with the British-owned auction house Bonhams, one of the oldest auctioneers in the world. "Being able to separate what's good from what's great is a very visual thing, particularly when what you're dealing with is usually one of a kind, or one of a limited few."

"Studying art and art history taught me to look at things critically. It gave me the ability to discuss and verbalize visual concepts. It's fine to say something is better but to be able to back that up with words—I learned that at UNH."



Ide specializes in pre-World War I and earlier models—the very, very earliest. He travels extensively internationally—Holland, the United Kingdom, Paris—and domestically to attend Bonhams' various sales as well as to deal with collections around the globe. Much of his time is spent finding cars for auction.

"You often have to track an automobile for years before it's consigned for sale," Ide says. "There's not a lot of really great stuff out there. What you want isn't that well publicized—you're not going to accidentally stumble upon one of these cars."

Ide took a circuitous route to UNH, transferring from an art school in Boston because he was drawn to the "more rounded education offered at UNH." He knew the school well through a brother who had studied here.

After graduation, he worked at a commercial gallery for a year before realizing that wasn't for him. From there he went to the Museum of Transportation (now the Larz

Anderson Auto Museum) in Brookline, Mass., where he was the collection manager and then eventually, curator. Bonhams, new to the country at the time, began holding auctions at the museum and Ide served as a consultant. That relationship continued after he left the museum to work for private antique car collectors. In 2008, he was hired by the auction house full time and was promoted to senior specialist in 2010.

An automotive historian, Ide is the author of “Packard Motor Car Company” and a contributing author of “The Stewardship of Historically Important Automobiles.” He is the American advisor to The Louwman Museum in The Hague, Netherlands. The Louwman has the oldest private collection of automobiles in the world that is open to the public.

“The fellowships I received at the university museum plus having the opportunity to curate an exhibit there were extremely useful to me,” Ide says of his time at UNH. “That got me on a track I wouldn’t have otherwise been on. To get two fellowships—that was a huge, huge thing to me personally. I’ve always been grateful for that.”

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