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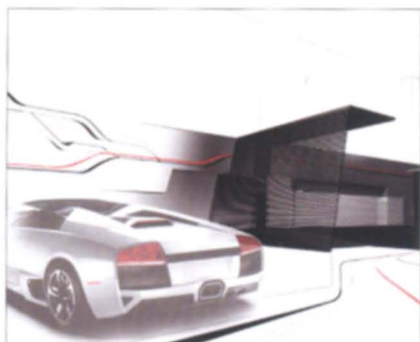
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# REFINED RIDES

BY EDWARD BARSAMIAN



## Classical Redux



*The Classic Car Club membership begins at \$7,500 for standard membership to \$22,875 for the Carbon Fiber Collection. One-time joining fee of \$1,500. Classic Car Club Manhattan: 212.229.2402 or manhattan.classiccarclub.com.*

WHAT CARS ARE IN my garage for this month? Take your pick—there are Lamborghinis, Ferraris, Aston Martins, and every other exclusive marques you can dream up. Confused? Jealous?

Before you think that I've suddenly received a windfall or a monumental raise (hint, hint), let me explain that I have recently become acquainted with a very special club located in downtown Manhattan.

Women have clubs where they can trade fashion and accessories, so it's only natural that men have an escape with cars. Brothers David and Phil Kavanagh dreamed up The Classic Car

Club in London in 1995, as an environment where men who enjoyed the finer things could escape the hustle and bustle and unwind with a selection of vintage sherry and vintage Jags, MGs, and Bentleys. The Club's satellite location, on chic Hudson Street, is celebrating its second anniversary this year.

I pulled up in the most adorable taxi (a Toyota Prius hybrid), and exited my borrowed ride and entered heaven (or as close as I will ever get...). I immediately met my friendly, young, and enthusiastic hosts, Michael Prichinello and Zac Moseley, the directors of the New York branch. Michael and Zac showed me a



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vintage Mercedes-Benz SL roadster they had just purchased. They explained that their highly-skilled technicians were hard at work tirelessly restoring the car to perfection.

Although the name of the club implies strictly classic models, Michael told me that demand from members for new, high-end sports cars and supercars with modern technology and horsepower has resulted in the club acquiring the latest offerings from Aston, Bentley, Ferrari, Lamborghini, and Maserati. My eye went straight to the DB9, an elegant grand touring coupe in a majestic shade that Aston calls Midnight Blue that reminds me of the navy fabrics on offer at Henry Poole and Co. on Jermyn Street. Always eager to give the Brits my support in their automotive endeavors, I hopped in and was ready to drive. The Club ran a quick background/insurance check to make sure that my record is impeccable. After passing their test, they

handed me the keys and I proceeded to race up Hudson back to the office to grab my bag and leave the city.

As much I loved the sleek DB9, as I was driving uptown, I realized that I also had an urge to go vintage. I enjoy vintage port, I should enjoy antique cars as well. The one catch? I can’t drive a stick. Optimistic chaps that they are, Michael and Zac told me it was not a problem, and that they would transform me into a regular Speed Racer.

Back downtown, I stalled time and time again on an exquisite 1972 silver BMW 2002 tii (the same car Jackie O. drove as an Editor at Doubleday). The automotive equivalent of Kris van Assche for Dior Homme, the 2002 tii looks better with more wear. The directors kept their cool more than I, who was ready to give up and head to their bar with the largest drink they serve. Frustration turned into sheer exhilaration two hours later, however, as instead of

*This page: A blazing red 2005 Ferrari F430 from the Club’s Carbon Fiber Collection. Previous page, top to bottom: The powder-blue 1969 Mercedes-Benz 280 SL; A rendering of the new interior for the clubhouse on Hudson Street.*

stopping and stalling, the road became mine. No longer was I petrified of traffic lights and changing lanes, I became a part of the car.

Unfortunately, feeling like a driving god is not free. However, the pricing for membership works out to being less than a lease or financing plan for one of the many rare and exotic cars that are available. Furthermore, there are no overhead costs for members such as insurance, garage fees, maintenance, etc. as it is all included in the dues.

Capping membership at 400, other features include invitation-only events such as cocktail parties with luxury goods sponsors, film screenings, and track days where members can (attempt) to reach the full potential of their car’s speed and power.

With access to over 40 stunning cars (including ten ultra-exclusive rides in the Carbon Fiber Collection), the only downside to Club membership is the time it takes to choose your mode of transport. Things could be worse. ♦