



It's a wrap! Sort of.

Last week we shot the last episode for the 2011 season (finally!), and it's going to be a good one. We were in New Hope, PA at Jim Grundy's place. Of course Jim is the Grundy of Grundy Worldwide Collector Car Insurance, but he is also a serious car guy. Jim's into all sorts of cars, but he has a soft spot in his heart for brass era vehicles, and he let me pick a couple of my favs from his collection to focus on.



place was gravel. I felt like I had been transported back to the early part of the 20th century... and I was already sporting the perfect mustache!

Not surprisingly, I went for a couple roadsters; a 1912 National Indy race car and a 1914 Mercer. I guess technically the National wasn't even considered a roadster. Purpose-built racers were referred to as "speed cars". This car was part of a five-car team fielded by National in the 1912 Indianapolis 500, and one of those cars actually won the race that year. Unfortunately, this particular car rolled, killing the driver. Still, that didn't stop me from getting on it when we were out driving. It also seemed appropriate that the road leading out of Jim's

We actually had a bit of excitement before we even got to the driving. When Jim went to fire the car up first thing that morning, the starter stuck, apparently sending the full current of the battery back thru the solenoid wire and as I was sitting there in the mechanics seat, I looked down and saw smoke billowing out from under my butt!



I leapt out of the car, yanked off the seat cushion, and whacked the solenoid with a wrench causing it to disengage. Ben, the cameraman, said he'd never seen me move so fast. Hey, you would too if you thought your butt was on fire!



The wire running from the solenoid to the battery was completely fried, but there was no other major damage so it was a pretty quick fix, and we were ready to go on with the shoot.

The National was really a beast. Pretty much a big engine and running gear, but little else. The engine was a 700+ cui, dual-plugged, long stroke, t-head design. And man was it loud!

Jim doesn't baby these cars either, nor did he require that I did. Driving this racer was really something. It was

a two-man job too. The driver had his hands full with wheel and the mechanic was in charge of the shift lever and the auxiliary brake. We actually made a pretty good team.

Even tho the Mercer was only two years newer than the National, it represented a significant leap in both design and technology. The was founded by brothers of fame, and while in New York company was Mercer County, the name. those cars were miles from where



Mercer company the Roebling Brooklyn Bridge they were based City, the car established in PA and hence Interestingly, built about 10 Jim lives.

While the boxy, loud, and was smooth, curvaceous, and a true roadster

National was big, raw, the Mercer sleek, refined. This was and a fairly

pricey one, so only people of means owned them back in the day. Actually, the same thing is probably true of them today. You definitely feel pretty grand when you're rolling down the road in this baby!

The weather forecast for that day had not been good, but the predicted afternoon storms never materialized and it ended up being a great shoot. This will be episode 26 (the last one!) of season 15, and will probably air in late July.

There won't be much of a break for me tho since we are leaving today for New Orleans to shoot an event this weekend called Back to the Beach, and this is actually already the third shoot for the 2012 season. Come Monday, it'll be three down and only 23 to go. Wait a minute...23 to go?!?

Happy Motoring,



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