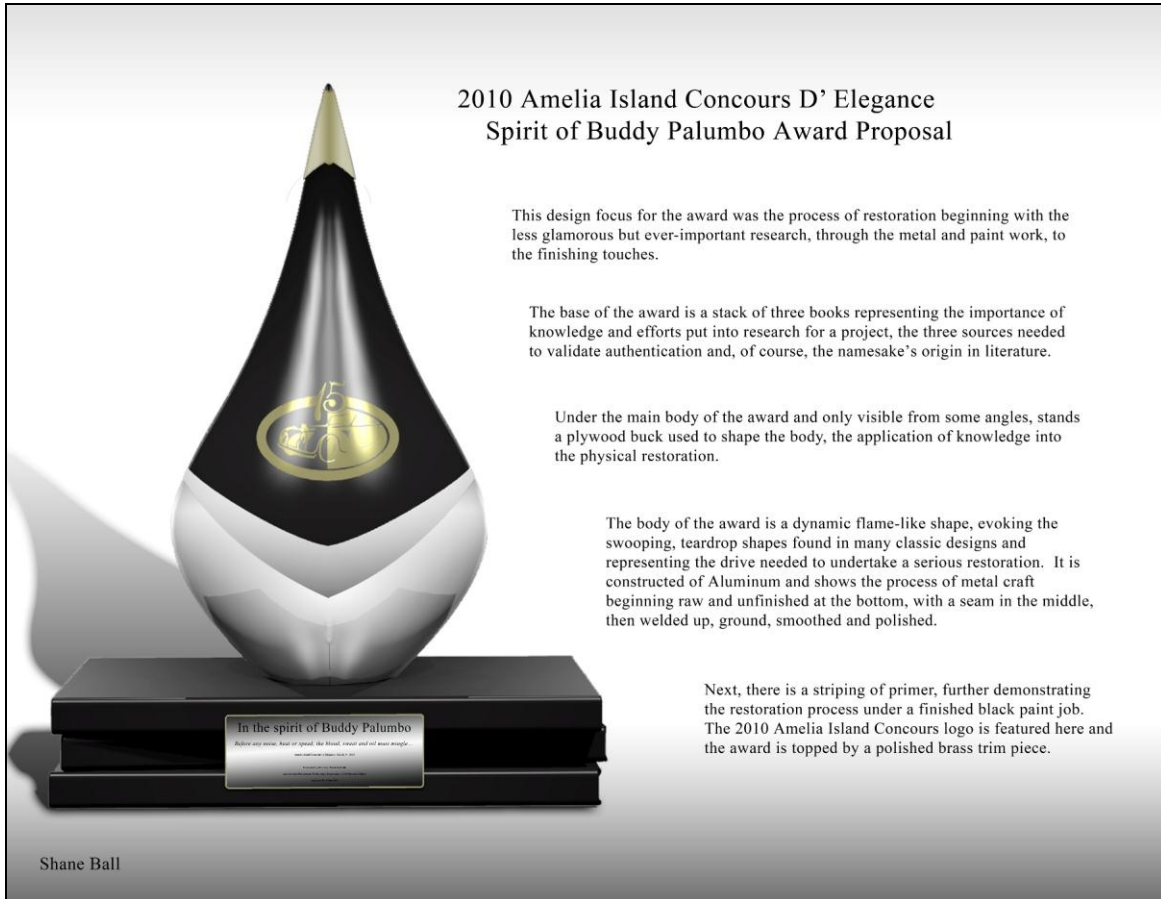


## Press Release

# A Very Special Award at Amelia Island!



Sunday, March 14<sup>th</sup> will once again find some of the most famous, beautiful, valuable and unique road and racing automobiles on the planet displayed on the beautifully landscaped lawns, fairways and putting greens around the elegant Ritz-Carlton Hotel on Amelia Island as the Amelia Island Concours d'Elegance returns for its fifteenth year. Event Founder and Chairman Bill Warner and his staff have worked very hard to make Amelia one of the premiere collector car events on the international calendar, and there are a wide variety of awards given to the crème de la crème. Most of the winners have been returned to their former glory by professional restoration shops (sometimes at staggering expense and effort) and a class win at Amelia Island is a coveted accomplishment for owners and restoration shops alike. And few would risk their finished handiwork to anything less than a sealed trailer for the journey to Jacksonville.

But there's one very special award at Amelia that, by design, won't go to a cost-no-object car owner or a meticulous crew of paid specialists. It's called the Buddy Palumbo award, and it may very well go to a car with the residue of a few squashed insects on the chrome and glasswork, and will almost surely wind up in a pair of hands with a little bit of grease under the fingernails and maybe even a gouge or two across the knuckles. Named after the narrator/hero of World's Fastest Novelist Burt "BS" Levy's cult-classic *The Last Open Road* series about a 19-year-old gas-station mechanic who gets swept into the upper-crust world of open-road sportscar racing during the Eisenhower fifties, the Buddy Palumbo award is intended specifically for an individual (or, better yet, a couple) who have done the majority of their restoration project themselves and have moreover *driven* their pride and joy to Amelia Island.



World's Fastest Novelist "BS" Levy in the Collier Collection Ferrari 250LM at Roebing Road Raceway near Savannah

"Burt and I have been friends for a long time," Bill Warner grins. "We've raced with and against each other many times over the years, and we've got the same kind of passion for interesting cars, motor racing, automotive history and the one-of-a-kind characters it all seems to attract. He's written a really outstanding series of novels about it. They're fun to read and yet amazingly accurate both mechanically and historically. He's signed books here as part of our show at Amelia many times, and four years ago he came to me with his idea for the Buddy Palumbo award. We thought it was terrific concept: to have a special award for the bedrock, hands-on enthusiasts who do their own work and actually enjoy driving their cars now and then rather than just showing them."

Burt picks up the story from there: "I wanted the award to be different every year—and a little unusual, too—and that first year my good friend Ted Wenz (one of the top racing engine builders in the country) welded up a kind of stick-figure sculpture out of broken engine parts. It's a guy with a wrench in his hand looking down at a busted transmission gear, and I think it kind of sums up the angst, effort, setbacks and anguish that are part of any restoration project."



2007 Buddy Palumbo Award

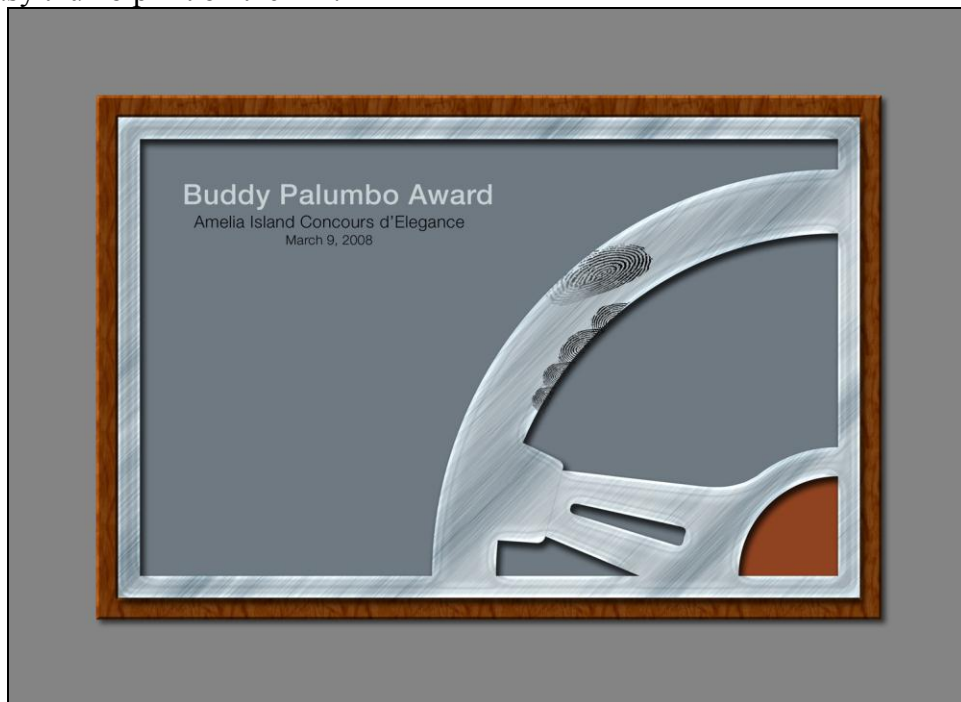
“A model-maker I know named Eric Koizumi did a beautiful permanent plaque that stays at Amelia Island with a huge wrench turning a scaled-down Derrington wood-rim steering wheel, and the line of copy on the wrench (which is repeated on the award each year) reads: *‘before any heat, noise or speed, the blood, sweat and oil must mingle...’*”



Buddy Palumbo Award permanent plaque

“That first year was pretty interesting,” Burt continues, “because I was busy doing a book signing at the show and yet I was supposed to be picking the winner from a list of eligible entries that Bill had given me. He saw that I was tied up, and so he went out to pick one for me, just in case. But I finally managed to sneak away and found this absolutely gorgeous old Jaguar E-Type coupe that belonged to—and had been restored from the ground up by—Gaye Haney and her husband. So I went up to the awards tent to tell Bill, and he just about went into shock. „I’m sorry,” he said, „but it looked like you were busy and couldn’t get away, so I went out and picked one for you. And it’s too late to change it, because the results have already been turned in.” Well, I wasn’t really mad at Bill—I mean, it’s his show and he was just trying to help out—but imagine our surprise when we discovered that, out of over 250 entries, we’d both picked the same exact car! We still laugh about that one.”

Burt’s good friend (and incidentally cover art and graphics guru for his books) Art Eastman designed the award the following next year—a plaque featuring a classic steering wheel with a greasy thumb print on the rim.



2008 Buddy Palumbo Award

“I couldn’t make it down that year for family reasons,” Burt explains, “and I was beginning to see that I really needed some sort of partner to co-sponsor the award with me. I

mean, it was my idea, but if I couldn't be there for some reason, I didn't want to just ship a trophy down and dump the responsibility for picking a winner on Bill and his people."

Enter McPherson College in McPherson, Kansas, the only accredited 4-year college to offer a major and a degree in Automotive Restoration Technology. "I originally met a couple of the McPherson faculty members when we were all getting a tour of Jay Leno's garage in Burbank. Jay introduced us, and I was really fascinated with what they were doing. So I approached them about co-sponsoring the award, and they thought it was a great idea. Last year I gave them a basic idea and one of their students, Miles Birch, did an absolutely wonderful (and colorful!) sculpture of a bunch of flowers growing out of a pot...only it's all made out of transmission shafts and rear-end gears and automatic transmission clutch plates. Miles and some of the McPherson staff helped pick the winning car, too."



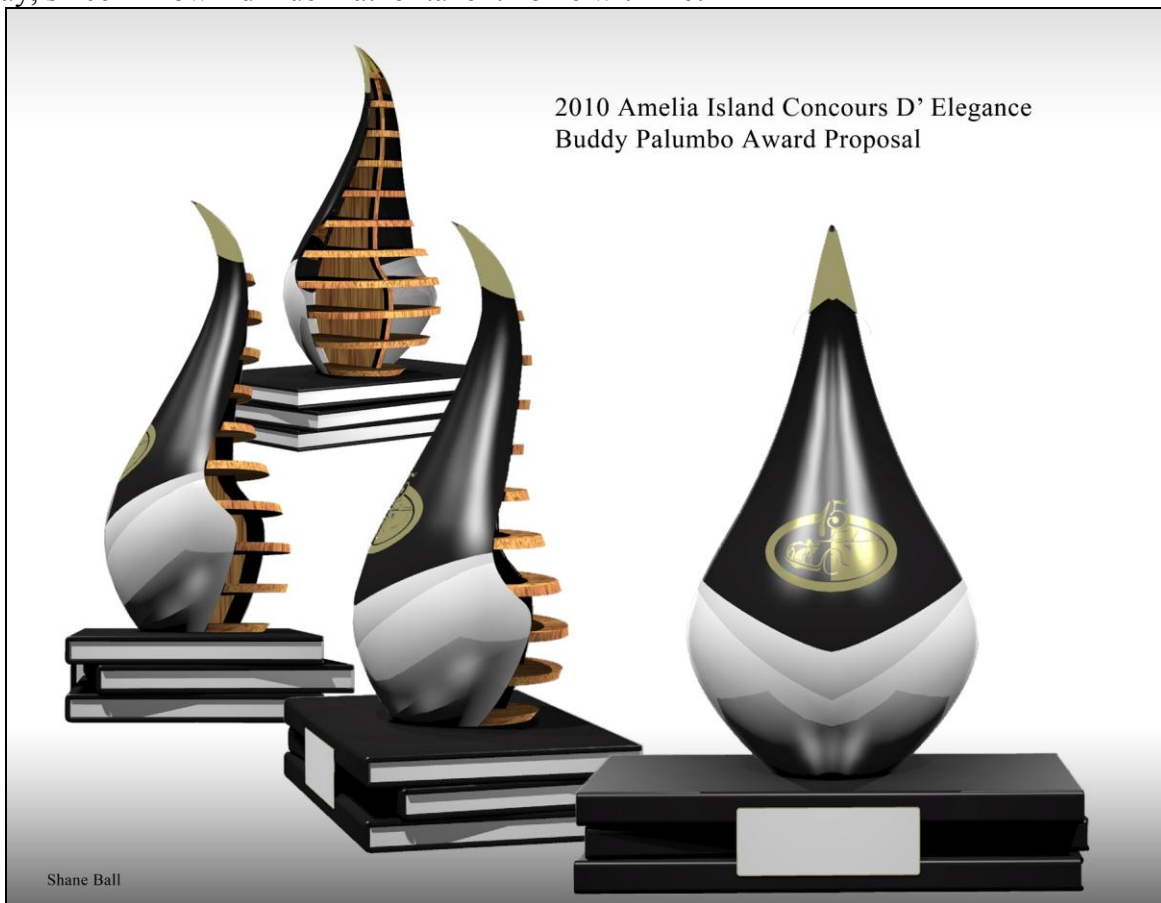
2009 Buddy Palumbo Award





Sculptor/student Miles Birch and his creation

“For this fourth year, one of the McPherson art students, Shane Ball, has come up with an exceptional and terrifically original design that captures both the emotional essence and the physical properties of the restoration process. Judging from his renderings, it’s going to be absolutely beautiful, and if you read his description, it shows that he understands the underlying philosophy and feeling. I can’t wait to see the finished piece! There’s going to be a whole group coming down from McPherson College this year, and I’m going to take a little time off signing books so we can pick the winner together. Although I know it’s going to make me sad to give it away, since I know I’d much rather take it home with me!”



For more information on the Concours, visit [www.ameliaconcours.org](http://www.ameliaconcours.org)  
For more information on Burt and his books, visit the website at [www.lastopenroad.com](http://www.lastopenroad.com)  
For more information on McPherson College, visit the website at [www.mcpherson.edu](http://www.mcpherson.edu)