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ART ON WHEELS

By Bruce Helander





Side view of the DiMora Vicci 6.2, Limited Edition Emperor Series of 25, 430-HP, 6.2 liter aluminum engine, racing suspension, state of the art electronics, Italian leather & English Wilton Wool carpeting, and featuring art by Master Lee Sun-Don; an original painting is included with the sale of each automobile.

It's not surprising that there are undisputed categories of extreme perfection, as in a perfectly cut yellow diamond from Van Cleef & Arpels on Worth Avenue; a four course dinner at Mr. Chow's in Beverly Hills; a perfectly tailored custom suit from Savile Row in London; or a private high powered Gulfstream jet flying at 700 miles per hour as it slices through the clouds. Ingenuity and superiority in design and performance are qualities that historically continue to be crucial ingredients that set companies and individuals whose passion is to make the finest product apart from all the rest.

When it comes to automobiles and racing machines there always has been the great tradition of pushing the aerodynamic envelope of style, innovation and speed, and with the increased value, lasting quality and prestige of vintage autos, they bring hundreds of thousands at auction as serious collectors try to outmaneuver the competition with intelligent and decisive bids. In addition, there always has been a prestigious, ongoing competition around the world to make the very best motorcar that money can buy. The inspiration and ultimate goal of inventing a hand-crafted sports car that is the best of its kind is a professional and expensive endeavor that ultimately has great rewards. The DiMora Vicci 6.2 limited edition Emperor Series (only twenty-five are planned), a multi-million dollar vehicle arguably among the most prized and most beautiful in the world, is the brainchild of Sir Alfred DiMora, who started to restore vintage cars when he was only fourteen years old.

As a young man, DiMora admits to being pushed over the edge about cars after seeing the film "American Graffiti" numerous times and was instrumental in eventually motivating him to plan and build his own unique custom, high-performance automobiles. The dis-

tingentive cruising style portrayed in the classic movie, which was often modified, lowered, customized and beefed up, had a charmed influence on DiMora, who followed his instincts and began rebuilding engines and transmissions and reading everything he could find on 1930s Roadsters. He moved to California as a young man, and found a job as a machinist while working part-time at a gas station. Soon he became one of the first employees at Clénet Coachworks, Inc., and not long afterwards, co-founded the Scapre Motorcar Company, with the goal of developing the innovative Scapre 6.6S. Success on this project cemented his lifelong journey to create some of the greatest motorcars in modern history. His hand-built Clénet automobiles (including the Series II Cabriolet and Series III Asha) soon attracted celebrities, royalty and other motor-enthusiasts around the planet, including Sylvester Stallone, Rod Stewart, Julio Iglesias, Farrah Fawcett and King Hussein of Jordan, to name a few. The Clénet began receiving world class attention as it appeared in movies and television shows such as "Dallas" and "Dynasty," and was called "Drive Art" by *Automotive Age* and labeled the "American Rolls Royce" by *Fortune* magazine.

DiMora began to see that both contemporary art and the modern automobile were becoming investment opportunities, and decided to combine these two by commissioning the renowned Taiwanese artist and Zen Master Lee Sun-Don, described by the artist's Beverly Hills X-Power Gallery as the "modern Asian Picasso," to create his art specifically for DiMora's spectacular custom automobile, the Vicci 6.2. Sun-Don was invited to participate in the 53rd Venice Biennale, as well as numerous prestigious venues, and just like DiMora's early visions of creating art on automobiles, it wasn't long before they realized that this unique collaboration of artist and



Sir Alted DiMora stands next to one of the vehicles on the production line in the DiMora Motorcar facility, Palm Springs, California.



A sketch pad of steering wheels and dashboards by DiMora, who also has sketched ideas for a variety of concepts, from Ferris wheels to futuristic cars.

engineer would make a perfect marriage of original fine art and industry. The first "paintings on wheels" was displayed at Art Revolution in Taipei in 2014, and the reaction both in sales and critical acclaim was simply astounding. Now the purchaser of the Vicci 6.2 emblazoned with Master Lee's vivid abstract color field imagery also receives a painting on canvas that embodies the spirit and form of the car, a unique circumstance in contemporary art history and automotive tradition.

Also unique in automobile history is that DiMora Motorcar's Neoclassic automobiles combine 21st century automotive expertise with the timeless styling of the 1920s and 1930s. Each vehicle is hand-

made, piece by piece, one beautiful unique car at a time in a pristine private factory in Palm Springs, California that looks like an unmarked high security secret scientific laboratory from the CIA. Inside the high-ceilinged steel warehouse, protected from the scorching desert sun, technicians are buzzing about quietly as they assemble different sections of the Vicci 6.2; while one mechanic is sorting through an impressive bundle of multi-colored microelectronic wires connected to a central computer, another is applying gold leaf to the doors. All components are examples of exceptional craftsmanship, from welding the chassis to hand-stitching fine Italian leather bucket seats, to installing English Wilton Wool carpeting, to state-of-the-art integrated circuit technology, which is among the best in the business. In addition, this classically styled motorcar boasts a 430-hp, 6.2 liter aluminum engine for a top speed of 185mph, a body constructed of DiMora patented Carbon DFD technology, racing suspension, and an aluminum drive shaft that contributes to its surprisingly light weight of only 2,820 pounds. The exterior matches the same goal of interior excellence, with a brilliant surface that is gloriously crowned with an original painting design by Master Lee on the hood with a composition that seems aerodynamic, as abstract brush strokes spin and twist as though propelled by the power of the car and the wind of a raceway. This is a truly remarkable story of determination, inventiveness and motivation that has combined a host of professional abilities into a magnificent piece of utilitarian sculpture and painting that's moving full speed ahead. **stb**

Bruce Helander is an artist who writes on art. He is a former White House Fellow of the National Endowment for the Arts, the former Editor-in-Chief of The Art Economist, and recently was inducted of the Florida Artists Hall of Fame.

