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FEATURED

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Keno Brothers go from selling Chippendale furniture to cars

Antiques Roadshow Regulars To Open Auction House



02:18



Keno Brothers - Rolling Sculpture / La Miura

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Eric Tegler

You've probably seen these guys if you've ever paused, mid channel-surfing, on the PBS television show *Antiques Roadshow*. Twins Leigh and Leslie Keno have been telling Roadshow hopefuls that their Victorian walnut writing desk isn't actually mint or that their Queen Anne Highboy chest is worth more than a new [Accord](#) since the mid-1990s.

They haven't just been appraisers. Each has sold fine furniture, artwork, and documents for years. Now the pair is wading into the high-end [auction](#) market for vintage cars.

The newly launched Keno Brothers Fine Automobile Auctions (KBFAA) will hold its inaugural auction, entitled "Rolling Sculpture," in New York City on Thursday, November 19 in the middle of the art auction season. The event will be a premium one but don't let the Savile Row suits and conversation about fabric swatches fool you – the Kenos have been enthusiasts forever.

"We're car guys first and antiques guys second," Leigh affirms. "We grew up going to antiques shows with grease under our fingernails."

The grease came from a succession of [classic cars](#) that the twins' father, Ron Keno, purchased at modest prices in the 1960s and '70s, including [Jaguar](#) XK120s/140s, XKEs, an MG TC, and a 1939 [Alfa Romeo](#) 6C 2500 Berlinetta that Mussolini originally purchased for his girlfriend. (Long since out of Keno hands, the car sold earlier this year for over \$2 million.)

The brothers have also smeared some of that grease on race car steering wheels, competing in vintage races at Lime Rock, Laguna Seca, and elsewhere in their 1959 Series-2 [Lotus](#) Eleven and late-'70s [Ferrari](#) 512 BB LM sports racers. The duo's involvement in the antique business and their automotive passion led them to the [Pebble Beach](#) Concours in [Monterey](#), CA, where Leigh began judging pre-WWII "preservation class" cars in 2004, joined a couple years later by Leslie.

We're car guys first and antiques guys second.

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For several years, the pair judged at Pebble and raced at the nearby Monterey Historics simultaneously. "It was crazy," Leigh enthuses, "to finish judging in blazer and tie then jump on the back of a [motorcycle](#) and weave over to the track at Laguna Seca and jump on to the grid in the Ferrari!"

With the advent of their new auction house, the Kenos' competition is now the likes of Sotheby's, Christie's, and Bonhams, among others. Getting great cars will be one of their challenges (at least 35 will be on offer in NYC, including a 1971 Le Mans-raced Ferrari GTB/4 Daytona). Standing apart from established premium auto auctions will be another.

"Everything that we've learned and incorporated in our lives as antiques and art [dealers](#), we're bringing to this auction house," Leigh explains. "It's an approach we don't think has been done elsewhere in the car auction world."

What's different? For one, the Kenos will apply the scientifically grounded approach to authentication and condition analysis employed in the art/antiques world to cars. Tools including UV light analysis, laboratory materials testing, even DNA sample matching are on the table. The new auction house is also assembling a team of experts and marque historians with a high level of credibility.

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Raising the bar by which vintage cars are presented and assessed includes what the Kenos say will be a new level of transparency with condition, provenance, and valuation issues disclosed in clear terms, right up front.

"I told my 17-year-old son, 'the two things I'm most proud of are you and the trust that I've built professionally.' That's all I have," Leigh stresses. "Our company embraces and embodies transparency."

It will also embrace technology as evidenced by the Kenos' choice of Bradley R. Farrell as COO. Farrell comes from a tech background, having run his own digital marketing firm, which counted Citrix and Cisco Systems among its clients. Along with Farrell comes proprietary software which will be integrated into the Keno Brothers' auction site.

With each auction lot description, expect aggregated market comparables – "The buyer doesn't have to go to ConceptCarz, to Hagerty, or to Sports Car Market, though they can if they want to dig deeper," Farrell says. There will be a measure of data visualization, videos, and the traditional pre-purchase inspection report, presented cleanly so as not to overwhelm less-tech-savvy users. Online bidding will be facilitated via integration of the KBAFAA site with popular auction platform Proxibid.

The Keno Brothers promise an elegant, multi-sensory experience with "Rolling Sculpture" at the Skylight at Clarkson Sq. showroom in SoHo. Museum-like sightlines will enhance each car, ranging from a 1969 [Lamborghini](#) Miura P400 S to a 1955 Ferrari 212 Inter owned by Prince Bernhard of the



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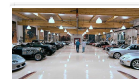
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Netherlands.

Another KBFAA auction is planned for summer 2016. Until then, you can check out the auction lots and watch the action at www.kenobrothers.com. And after you [buy a car](#) from the Kenos, you can have them appraise that heavy old armoire your great aunt left you.



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jich8chy3chah8wurt2thuk3ghy7ly

1 Day Ago

They often are in attendance at Amelia Concours. I've spoken with them a number of times. They are very pleasant and extremely gracious. I almost backed up over them when backing the Aventador roadster up... they are in the blue blazers behind the car here i.imgur.com/vBP7lqE.jpg

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dukeisduke

9 Hours Ago

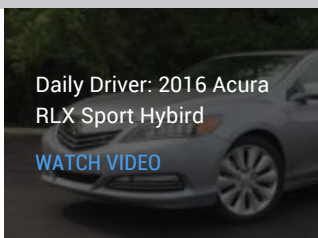
@jich8chy3chah8wurt2thuk3ghy7ly

I didn't realize they were car guys until I read a piece about them in the Hemmings Daily Blog some months back. They have infectious enthusiasm when going over a piece of Early American furniture, so I can imagine they're something to watch at a concours.

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