Crowds Flock to Cars 'R' Stars Show at Packard Grounds

by Ross Raybin

Classic cars, vintage trailers and other vehicles line the recent 2013 Cars 'R' Stars Show.

It's one of the oldest classic car shows in Michigan and every year thousands of spectators come to visit.

This year was no exception as the 2013 Cars 'R' Stars show proved to be another success.

Several thousand spectators and hundreds of vehicles made the trip to the Packard Proving Grounds in Shelby Township June 9 to get a glimpse of cars both old and new.

Formerly known as Carnival of Cars, this is the event's fourth year taking place at the proving grounds.

Each year, the show has a special feature – this year's was "Tin Can Tourists." A special section was set up for vintage trailers and motor coaches throughout time, including the hallmark aluminum-constructed Airstream trailers of the 1950s and '60s.

"We try to have a unique feature each year," said Tom Mitchell, Cars 'R' Stars chairman. "The first year, we held the event it was 'woodies' (vehicles with wood paneling along the side) and last year it was dragsters."

According to Mitchell, this year they were looking outside the box, so to speak, when they came across the "Tin Can Tourists."

"We're constantly trying to improve the show and make it more attractive to visitors," he said.

Some new things to this year's show were two 50/50 raffle drawings and bathrooms installed at the proving grounds.

While the vintage cars are the main attraction, the "Tin Can Tourists" feature drew quite a crowd.

Several of the vintage trailers had classic cars towing them and participants came from Michigan, Ohio and Ontario.

Michael and Tina Lambert drove a little more than two hours, from St. Thomas, Ontario, to take part in the show.

The two are members of the "Tin Can Tourist" club and brought their 1962 Bambi Airstream trailer, towed by their blue-and-white 1956 Ford Fairlane.

"This is our first time here," said Tina. "The vintage trailers are great to pair with the classic cars."

The Lamberts were dressed the part as well, donning outfits from the 1950s to go along with their retro-vehicle and trailer.

"We have a 1956 retro-ranch home," said Michael. "From one end to the other, it's outfitted in 1950s items."

When asked why he liked the '50s so much, Lambert said because "that era was about looking forward more than any other decade."

While the vintage trailers may have been this year's special attraction, Cars 'R' Stars is known for including all makes and models of collectible vehicles.

The field included everything from brass era and pre-war to post-war, hot rods, muscle cars, trucks, dragsters, and custom, commercial and military vehicles.

Bill Andrew, of Sterling Heights, had his MG TD convertible kit on display.

"I've been coming here for several years," he said, "since back when it was called the Carnival of Cars."

Spectators young and old also seemed to be enjoying themselves. Ed Pavlica and his 13-year-old son Nicholas attend the show every year.

"I'm partial to the Mustangs," said Pavlica. "He (Nicholas) likes the expensive cars. I believe his favorite was the new Lamborghini."

Vehicles were judged the same as they would be at any other car show. Judges scored the cars, based on category, and awarded participants unique trophies.

This year's award was a piston with a piece of crafted wood, from the historic Packard Plant in Detroit, used as a base.

All the proceeds from the show go toward the preservation and restoration of the Packard Proving Grounds.

Sterling Heights Fest Scheduled For July 25-27

The Sterling Heights Regional Chamber of Commerce and Industry is teaming up with the city of Sterling Heights to put on "Sterlingfest."

The event is scheduled to be held July 25-27 at the City Center campus on 40555 Utica Road in Sterling Heights.

Sterlingfest is a combination of arts and crafts, music and food held over a three-day period. It's an event designed for families.

Celebrating its 33rd year, Sterlingfest mixes an arts and crafts fair with the Concentra Jazz and Blues Stage, a Suds'n'Sounds stage, Coach's Ice Cream Kidzfest children's activities and entertainment stage, a family midway, local restaurateurs and a main concert stage.

The festival begins at 10 a.m. and goes until 11 p.m. on all three days.

While most events are free to attend, there will be a $2 charge at the Suds 'n' Sound tent after 6 p.m.

Show-Goers Check Out Bill Andrew's 1952 MG TD

by Ross Raybin

Sterling Heights resident Bill Andrew was one of hundreds of car owners who took part in the Cars 'R' Stars show at the Packard Proving Grounds on Sunday, June 9.

Hundreds of vehicles, from the early 20th century through 2013, were on display at the event.

Andrew brought his 1952 MG TD convertible kit for show-goers to take a look at and ask questions about.

"I bought it a couple years ago," he said. "The guy who built it did a great job and it was in good condition."

Andrew said he's always been interested in the MG TD. Back when he was younger, he was looking into purchasing one but didn't.

According to Andrew, he was considering an MG TD or Triumph, which he said was "similar in style in the 1960s."

He's always been interested in cars. He worked as a mechanic at Chrysler for 31 years and always repaired and fixed classic vehicles as a hobby.

"When I'd get home from work, I'd always have a project waiting for me," he said.

Even with his MG TD, Andrew said he continues to take on new projects and challenges.

"My uncle bought a brand new 1929 Chevy when they came out," he said, "I've been working to restore it for almost seven years now."

While he did purchase the MG TD already assembled, Andrew has added his own touches to the vehicle. He's made modifications to the interior and the dash.

"It was well done," he said, "I added a few of my own touches."

Andrew has been bringing his vehicle to the Cars 'R' Stars show for several years now, but he's been attending the event for much longer.

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