

Sunriver Festival of Cars Elevates Its Game

September 14-16

By John Draneas

The Sunriver Festival of Cars has been a hugely successful event, recognized by many as their favorite car event of the year. The opportunity came to take it to a higher level, and we just couldn't say no. So now it's the Oregon Festival of Cars, and it will be held in the Les Schwab Amphitheater in the Old Mill District of Bend.

This is one of the most exciting venues in Oregon. The Old Mill District is the newest, hippest area in Bend, kind of like Bend's version of the Pearl District or Rodeo Drive. It sits on the Deschutes River with fantastic views of the surrounding mountains. You cross an attractive foot bridge over the river to enter the three-acre amphitheater that is the site of numerous concerts, festivals and other events throughout the year. It's a vibrant, high energy location that sets the pulse for Central Oregon entertainment. The owners didn't know it right off, but it's also a fabulous site for a car show. Check it out for yourself at <http://www.theoldmill.com>.

The immediate advantage is space. We have three acres of grass to fill with beautiful cars, sponsors, vendors and other attractions. We also have additional space surrounding the facility for additional attractions. This lets us do most anything we want.

But most important, we have already been amazed by the level of interest and support we have received from the community. The eagerness displayed by the Old Mill District and its merchants is not all that surprising, but excited support is coming from all over Bend and the surrounding area. The Bend Visitors Association is so excited about the event that they relocated a mountain bike race to be sure it didn't interfere with the Festival. The Chamber of Commerce, local media, local charities, local businesses and a host of other organizations are enthusiastic about the potential. We are totally confident that we will have a successful event, and expect several thousand spectators to come through the gates.

As excited as we are about the future, we aren't going to forget our past and will always honor our roots. The Festival always has been, and always will be, about maximum fun and camaraderie among the participants. It's been fun because we have all enjoyed the opportunity to wrap up the car event year with a low-key event that we could take as seriously or whimsically as we wanted. We've all enjoyed being able to share the field with other car nuts of every persuasion, whether they drive Porsches, Audis, BMWs, Mercedes Benzes, Jaguars, Ferraris, Lamborghinis, or even really weird stuff. We've enjoyed comparing rides, making friends, swapping stories, and eating and drinking together. And we've learned from each other what the personalities of the various marques are, and why they appeal to their owners. It's been the most successful example of automotive multiculturalism around. All of that is going to remain the same, even as we move to a bigger stage. We promise.

The organizing team is working feverishly to design the best Oregon car event ever, and much remains to be worked out. Here's what we know so far:

- We'll have an organized drive from the Portland area to Bend on Friday morning.
- As always, we'll start with a Friday evening registration and reception. It will be at the Les Schwab Amphitheater, and most likely be accompanied by a BBQ dinner.
- You will have your choice of staging your car on the field on Friday evening or on Saturday morning.
- The Festival car show will run 10-3 on Saturday. The featured display this year will be British Cars. Yes, the missing parts, broken parts, parts on fire gang.

- Musical entertainment will be provided by the Dan Balmer Trio.
- The Festival emcee will be Keith Martin, publisher of Sports Car Market and American Car Collector magazines, star of the "What's My Car Worth?" TV series, and Boxster S owner.
- We are going to award more prizes this year, but don't worry. No one is going to be rewarded for having the biggest Qtips. It's still going to be a shine and show type of event, and you will be very comfortable showing the car you drove to Bend, rock chips and all.
- The Saturday evening Festival Banquet will be held at Club Carrera, nestled among the cars. If you haven't been there, it's the gorgeous car storage facility operated by Carrera Motors.
- The ever-popular Sunday Dash will return. It's a two-hour romp through the high desert that starts with breakfast and ends with a great lunch at an attractive venue. We haven't nailed it down yet, but we have a site picked out that offers a magnificent lunch setting and may well be a place you've never heard of before.
- The Festival has regularly provided substantial support to Central Oregon charities. This year we are partnering with The Center Foundation, which provides free orthopedic services to student athletes in the Central Oregon area.

We are also working on a lot of added features that have not yet been nailed down. We can't predict what will actually happen, but here are some things we've been kicking around:

- Carrera Motors is working on an off-road Cayenne demo, perhaps with factory support.
- Ron Tonkin Gran Turismo is working on factory support from Lotus.
- Closing down some of the adjoining streets to create a closed circuit for demo rides to benefit our charity.
- Wine pavilion.
- Beer garden.
- Country displays with food and product vendors and presentations about their automotive marques.
- A race driver speaker at the banquet.
- A grand exit parade over the bridge and through the Old Mill District.

Again, we don't know how much of this will actually work out, and this is just a sampler of what we are working on. We have a lot of other ideas in the hopper, and you can be sure that there will be plenty to do at the Festival. If you have ideas about other features that could be added, please let us know. We love help!

And, perhaps most important for our friends, we are going to keep pricing the same as last year.

If you've been to the Festival before, you know how fun it is, and this year will reinvigorate your enthusiasm. If you haven't been to the Festival before, this is the year to make it your first year.

Updates will be published in *Anzeiger* and on the ORPCA website. You can follow developments on the Festival website, www.oregonfestivalofcars.com, where you can also sign up for the Festival mailing list, and you can also catch us on our Facebook page, <http://www.facebook.com/FestivalofCars>.

In the meantime, mark your calendar for September 14-16. You won't want to miss the car event of the year.