

ROAD RALLY REDEFINED:

MUSCLE CARS, MOVIE STARS, MARTINI BARS

SAN DIEGO, PALM SPRINGS, JOSHUA TREE, ORANGE COUNTY, SANTA MONICA, SANTA BARBARA



Jere and Katy Clark
Phoenix AZ
1967 Chevrolet Nova
500 hp 502 V8

The Muscle Car 1000 is an annual special interest road rally event, carefully planned to cover 1000 miles of great roads, while featuring top-tier wining, dining and five-star accommodations at each stop over several days.

Muscle cars have gained tremendously in popularity over the past several years, with auction prices going sky-high. Their nostalgic popularity has also brought us a new Ford Mustang, Dodge Challenger and Chevrolet Camaro, each a nuevo-retro iteration of the originals. But there ain't nothin' like the real thing. Put it all together, and Muscle Car 1000 founder Chris Hoskins presents a lifestyle experience that combines speed and sophistication. Oh, and drag racing. Though you see these cars in shows, on the auction block, and occasionally in traffic, you don't often see them laying it down like that.

Lest this all sound a bit hedonistic (and we're not saying it's not—but all in a very good way), proceeds from the event are contributed to the Hunger Relief Organization (HeRO), which establishes centers to feed undernourished children in Honduras and other developing countries.

This was the 5th annual running of the event—it was held in northern California last year and it will be held in northern California again next year. But this year, the route was right next door in southern California, ranging from San Diego to Palm Springs and back to the coast, from Irvine, through Santa Monica and up to Santa Barbara. We were able to catch the Santa Monica stage.

There were participants from seven states plus Canada. Arizona was represented by two teams: Katy and Jere Clark of Phoenix, in their 500-hp '67 Chevy Nova, and Josephine and Drew Alcazar of Phoenix, owners of the Russo and Steele

Katy and Jere Clark of Arizona (left) show off their performance '67 Nova at the Santa Monica Pier. The cars lined up for some fine-tuning at The Grand Del Mar hotel in San Diego (upper right), site of the first of five nights' high-end resort hospitality. The event took care of the luggage; the teams took care of the cars. Drew and Josephine Alcazar of Phoenix went pure classic in a '63 Ford Galaxie. As night fell, the cars arrived in La Quinta CA, near Palm Springs, for the first night of a two-night stay. Photo left: Joe Sage. Photos right: Lance Perkins.



KEEP RIGHT >>



With two nights in Palm Springs, the teams took a day to explore Joshua Tree National Park, where “off-roaders” of an athletic two-legged type scaled rock formations. Track time in Irvine included one TV housewife and one blown car, with a '69 Hemi Cuda failing under duress. The pace calmed down on the Santa Monica Pier, at lunch in the Reagan Library's Air Force One Pavilion, and at the final overnight in Santa Barbara. Photos: Lance Perkins.

Auction, who—with a choice of near-limitless spectacular machinery—drove a white 240-hp '63 Ford Galaxie. Drew says he chose it because it is “just like my very first car, given to me by my great-grandfather.” That’s hard to top.

Sunday, October 4, marked the group’s arrival at The Grand Del Mar hotel in San Diego, nestled by the Los Penasquitos Canyon Preserve and presenting old-world Mediterranean estate charm with the modern luxury of an elegant resort.

On Monday, the full collection of rare machinery worked its way along a 150-mile course through southern California to Palm Springs. (One key feature of the event is its use of GPS technology to track where all vehicles are at all times, providing friends, families and fans the latest details.) On Monday and Tuesday nights, the teams stayed at La Quinta Resort & Club, in La Quinta CA, just east of Palm Springs. A public Concours d’Elegance was held from 5-7pm on resort grounds, followed by a private dinner for all rally participants at the La Casa Courtyard, former home of Greta Garbo. Accommodations were bungalow style poolside casitas.

Fully rested, the team took its cars to Joshua Tree National Park on Tuesday, for a breathtaking three-hour tour of the park, and a chance to watch some rock climbing. From there, it was back to civilization, for spa time, shopping and relaxing poolside at the resort, capped with a sunset dinner at The Dunes Clubhouse.

On Wednesday, the group drove back down to the coast, and the gloves came off in Irvine at The Great Park, for a few hours of midday drag racing—and a barbecue lunch—on the runways of the former El Toro Marine Base airfield. TV personality Tamra Barney of *The Real Housewives of Orange County* served as official “flag girl” for the races. One '69 Hemi Cuda suffered event-ending mechanical failure; owners Jamie and Joy Hogg grabbed a substitute vehicle in Orange County, to continue the trip.

THE TEAMS AND THEIR CARS

Drew and Josephine Alcazar	Phoenix AZ	1963 Ford Galaxie	White, 352ci, 240hp
Jere and Katy Clark	Phoenix AZ	1967 Chevrolet Nova	Yellow, 502 V8, 500hp
Mark and Tina Bachman	San Diego CA	1969 Chevrolet Camaro	Blue, LS2, 530hp
Jeff and Catherine Sachs	Poway CA	1969 Chevelle	Orange/Black, 396ci, 350hp
Hogan/Sarah Hammarstrom	Fountain Valley CA	1970 Cuda	Orange/Black, 440, 500hp
Jay and Sarah Jeffs	Apple Valley CA	1968 Dodge Dart	Silver, 300ci, 320hp
Larry and Ellen Macks	Owings Mills MD	1970 Buick Stage 1	White/Black, 455-455hp
Tom and Elaine Rhein	Tulsa OK	1959 Chevrolet Corvette	Blue, LT4, 440hp
Bobby and Gail Cheney	Dallas TX	1970 Plymouth Cuda	Blue, 426ci, 425hp
Gary Schaevitz and Tony Podell	NY & CA	1964 Cobra 427	Grey, 427ci, 550hp
Bill Scheffler and Kim Cooper	CT & CA	1968 Pontiac GTO	Green/Black, 340ci, 320hp
Jamie and Joy Hogg	Red Deer, Alberta	1969 Hemi Cuda Conv.	B/W, 426ci, 622hp

After the tough challenges of racing, participants headed north to Casa Del Mar hotel in Santa Monica. Around sunset, another Concours d’Elegance, this time on the famous Santa Monica Pier, was open to the public. Rally participants enjoyed a red carpet reception in the Carousel Building on the Pier, with a live performance by tribute band Hollywood U2.

On Thursday, the cars embarked on the last leg of the road rally, to Santa Barbara. First stop, a private tour of the Nethercutt Collection and Museum in Sylmar CA, home to over 250 American and European automobiles dating from 1898 to 1997, and to the Nethercutt Automotive Research Library and Archives. A White House luncheon followed at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, served in the shadow of Air Force One and Marine One, both permanently installed in an impressive indoor pavilion.

Once all sightseeing was complete, the teams rallied to the Four Seasons Resort The Biltmore in Santa Barbara, on the waterfront. Pure Santa Barbara, this classic West Coast resort blends the glory of historic California with Four Seasons service in the heart of “America’s Riviera.” It was a great place to wrap up the event, and an opportunity to discuss the next great escape, coming in 2010.

For more information and route details, visit www.musclecar1000.com. ■

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