

ON THE ROAD



Brian Fidler, for the Calgary Herald
Peter Tilley and his E-type Jaguar participate in the 2006 Vintage on the Prairies event. Bob Friezen follows in his Alfa Romeo Spider.

Vintage vehicles put class on track



Take a step back in time this weekend as vintage racecars prove their mettle, thundering around Race City's two-mile (3.22-kilometre) road course.

According to Calgary Vintage Racing Club (CVRC) vice-president, Anthony Kalcounis, this is the club's most anticipated event of the year.

"It's an outlet for local guys and girls interested in vintage vehicles to get together and race," Kalcounis, 31, says.

"(The weekend) is also the one time of the year when people with vintage cars come from Edmonton, Saskatoon, Regina, Vancouver and Seattle to race."

Kalcounis says this is the 15th consecutive Vintage on the Prairies event, (calgaryvintageracing.ca), and all manner of cars can be expected to show up — from a classic Ford GT40 to an MGA.

The vehicles are divided into three classes. Small Bore features cars with engines less than 2.5-litres in size, Big Bore, larger than 2.5-L, and there is also an Exhibition class for vehicles that might fall outside of usual vintage age restrictions.

Says Kalcounis, "The definition of a vehicle suitable for vintage racing is a build date of Dec. 31, 1969 or older. But we make exceptions up to 1975, and sometimes even later.

"We're most interested in having more cars and more people participate. At the end of the day it's not about all-out competition. We enjoy competition, but not at the expense of the experience."

But where it gets interesting, and downright unique, is the CVRC runs all three classes on the track, together, in wheel-to-wheel racing.

"It's actually more fun to have everyone together," Kalcounis says. "Rather than 10 or 15 cars on the track, it's a lot more fun to have upwards of 30 cars, all with different specifications and different drivers."

Kalcounis got his start in vintage racing after taking part in the vintage lapping events. As part of the weekend's activities, enthusiasts can bring out a vintage car, which they've restored and try it out on the track — with a strict no-passing rule — hence vintage lapping.

"I started out using my 1974 BMW 2002 Alpina on those sessions, and I got more and more intrigued," Kalcounis says.

But the Alpina was his show car, so he purchased a rusty BMW 2002 and started preparing it as a race car.

"Then I found a race-prepared 1970 BMW 2002 on eBay, and I bought that car out of the U.S. instead," he says. "It's very expensive initially to build a

race car, and it's sometimes much more cost effective just to buy someone else's project."

This 2007 Vintage on the Prairies event will be his third season with the eBay-purchased BMW 2002. The car features a full roll cage, 13-inch Panasport racing wheels, racing seat with five-point harness and a fire suppression system.

The weekend is a great time to catch race action as Vintage on the Prairies runs in conjunction with GT championship races and open wheel racing presented by the Western Canadian Motorsports Association.

"We'll have a pavilion set up with all of the vintage cars, and people can come and mingle and talk to the owners," Kalcounis says.

Vintage on the Prairies is at Race City from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday. A spectator pass is \$10 at the gate.

To recognize the 40th anniversary of the Canadian Vintage Motorcycle Group the club's current president embarked on a cross-Canada coast-to-coast relay, and recently stopped in Calgary.

During his Calgary stop, CVMG president Peter Salter said, "The initial impetus for the run was to link our 27 sections."

The CVMG has just over 1,700 members, with sections in every province from Nova Scotia to B.C.

Salter, aboard a 1977 BMW R75/5, started the run on June 28 in Chester, N.S. After dipping the wheels of their machines in the Atlantic, Salter and his friend Al Mears, from Welland and Grand Bend, Ont., respectively, have been working their way west, visiting every section along the way.

Some CVMG members have come along for more than a day's ride, while others simply ride for the day.

"We wanted to avoid the super highways, to allow for slower running of the old bikes," Salter says, but adds, "we've had a lot of modern bikes on the run."

A pre-Second World War Ariel side-valve single made the day's ride in New Brunswick, and a 1947 Indian Chief toured through parts of Ontario.

Salter and Mears planned to visit Mile 0 in Victoria on Aug. 4, and were then travelling down the West Coast to San Luis Obispo, Calif. From there they will retrace what's left of old Route 66, heading in a northeasterly direction for home.

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What's Next

■ Saturday: Airdrie Summer Classic at Nose Creek Park in Airdrie. Registration from 8 to 11 a.m., show from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Spectators welcome with a Food Bank donation. Info line at 912-2141.

■ Aug. 18: Northern Mopars 18th annual all Chrysler and A.M.C. show and shine at Canada Olympic Park. Registration from 9 a.m. until noon; \$20 for vehicle judging or \$10 for non-competition showing. Show and shine until 4 p.m. Call Larry at 243-4703, e-mail llgammon@telusplanet.net, or visit mopars.org.

■ Aug. 25: MiniRun 2007 sees Mini Coopers parading and rallying around Calgary in support of the Alberta Mentor for Youth program. Start time is 10 a.m. at Frank Sisson's Silver Dollar Casino at 1010 42 Ave. S.E., and ends back there for a dinner and dance at 5 p.m. Registration deadline has been extended to Aug. 20, and is \$120 for each Mini, including driver and navigator. Additional passengers are \$20 each. Visit miniruncalgary.com for more info, or call Gord Morrison at 257-4828.

■ Aug. 26: Cool Cars Cruising For Cancer at McMahon Stadium should offer close to 2,000 cars on display from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Aug. 17 is the cutoff for pre-registration, which is strongly encouraged, \$30 per vehicle. All funds go to the Canadian Cancer Society. Visit coolcarscruising4cancer.ca for more info.

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