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Orinda Classic Car Show bigger than ever

By Sora O'Doherty



John Vaneck in his classic 1997 yellow Ford Mustang. Photo Sora O'Doherty

There have been some changes in personnel, but the Orinda Classic Car Show will continue into its 15th year with more cars on display than ever. John Vaneck of Orinda Motors Classic Car Center, one of the original founders of the show, expects that there will be over 200 classic vehicles on display to the public on Saturday, Sept. 7, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. The cars will fill the Orinda Motors lot and the streets around the Center at 63 Orinda Way, which will be closed to traffic during the event. This year, there will be a special exhibit of vintage Porsche cars and station wagons. Cars on display will range from the 1920s, classics from the '50s, '60s and '70s and modern exotics such as Maseratis and Lamborghinis.

The event is a major fundraiser for good causes, together with the Dancing with the Cars dinner dance held the evening before the car show by Orinda Rotary. Over the years, the car show has raised over \$700,000

for good causes, including the Educational Foundation of Orinda, the Lamorinda Arts Council, the Historical Society, and the Orinda Association's Seniors Around Town program that provides free transportation for seniors. The bulk of the funds raised goes to Seniors Around Town, which, according to Bill Waterman, OA Treasurer, is now providing 1,500 rides a year using over 50 volunteer drivers.

This year's Dancing with the Cars dinner dance will be held on Sept. 6 at the Art & Garden Center at Wilder. For \$130 per person, party goers can obtain tickets that include dinner, exclusive car displays, music, and dancing. This year's party is themed "Wheels That Won the West." Tickets can be purchased online.

Chip Herman, the other founder of the car show, has stepped away from this year's event, which a committee now oversees. The Orinda Association is taking over the car show's organization, which Vaneck points out is the second largest event in Orinda after the Fourth of July parade. Vaneck continues to take care of signing up the cars to be on display. Waterman and OA board member Diane Lutz chair the committee, which also includes Kate Wiley, OA Board member and director of the Seniors Around Town ride program, Vaneck and Allen Pennebaker of Orinda Motors, Bill Criswell, Mike Robinson and David Alvarado, all of Orinda.

Vaneck is the definition of a classic car enthusiast, and he will be exhibiting his classic 1997 Ford Mustang. He founded the car show in 2004 with Herman after assembling a lot of classic cars on the lot of Orinda Motors to film an advertisement for the shop. Looking at the assembled cars, they were struck with the thought, "Hey, let's start a classic car show," and so they did.

There are no prizes awarded, and car enthusiasts just take advantage of the opportunity to exhibit their cars or to view the cars on exhibit. Some owners stay with their vehicles, in order to interact with the public; others avoid the crowds. Owners pay a fee of \$60 to exhibit their cars, and, although the public is free to view the cars without a contribution, donations are sought to assist the many worthy organizations that benefit from the show. The public is encouraged to donate \$10 per person, and, upon registration, each person is given a wrist band that entitles them to a free soda. Food will be offered by Taverna Pelligrini.

More information, including ticket information, can be found at: www.orindacarshow.com/enjoy-dancing-with-the-cars/

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