

Goodguys wraps another season

The curtain closed on the Goodguys 2016 event season in November, at Westworld in Scottsdale, as the stars and cars of hot rodding gathered for the 19th Southwest Nationals, with chrome and color under sunny desert skies. The three-day weekend event attracted over 3,400 vintage hot rods, customs, muscle cars and trucks, a great many from Arizona plus others from throughout the US and Canada (the Long Distance Award went to Donnie and Brenda Hayes of Ontario, Canada, who brought their 1939 Ford Deluxe). A crowd of revved-up enthusiasts numbered in the tens of thousands.

The event kicked off on Thursday night, with a Hot Rod Cruise around the Valley. Friday through Sunday, down on the Westworld polo field, automotive mania took the shape of thousands of colorful cars, cruising and carrying on. It resembled a vast sea as every blade of grass was covered with hot rods, customs, classics, and tricked out trucks. Car club banners flew, privateers partied and

everyone came together like never before.

The show field itself was ringed with the biggest swap meet and Cars 4 Sale corral this event has ever known. It was in such demand, all available spaces were sold out five weeks prior to the event gates opening. The swappers and sellers enjoyed a brisk business as everyone gathered for one last blast before the Thanksgiving holiday.

But wait. There was more. In addition to all that, the vendor midway was stacked with heavyweights, still on a west coast layover from the SEMA show. The industry's top manufacturers held court and didn't mind the swarms of spectators. They also filled the big top tent offering everything from electronics to wheels, to go-fast goodies and more. The model car show offered up some fantastic plastic, while the Revell Model Car Make & Take insured every kid went home with a free model kit.

There are sponsored awards by category—99 total this year—including 26 (something) of the Year Awards, the Top 10 Hot Rods by Dean Builder's Choice Awards and 63 general awards in categories profound and/or whimsical. The Top 10 Builder's Choice Award winners, the Vintage Air Custom Rod of the Year and the F.A.S.T. AutoCrosser of the Year combine for a final Top 12 display in the upper paddock area on Sunday.

Dean Livermore chose the ten Builder's Choice Award cars and trucks from among heavy hitters parked on the pavement in a jam-packed Saturday

parking area display. This left two more Top 12s, from another seven custom rod finalists on hand.

When the final votes were cast on Saturday afternoon, Paul and Betty Gilliam of Birmingham, Alabama claimed the Vintage Air Custom Rod of the Year crown, for their sensational black '53 Studebaker built by Alan Johnson.

Just one more Top 12 spot remained open—the Goodguys 2016 F.A.S.T. AutoCrosser of the Year Award. Unlike all the other awards, which are won through a scoring sheet or expert opinion, this one is earned via a checkered flag. With a national cast of 32 gear-grinding G-machines and track-tested trucks vying for the spoils, the winner of Saturday afternoon's Duel in the Desert presented by BF Goodrich, Spectre Performance, Turnology, and Tremec would need to negotiate five flawless rounds of mechanical fury. With qualifying all day Friday plus Saturday morning, final eliminations began with Scott Fraser sitting on the pole position. Fraser extended his dominance all the way until the final round, squaring off against defending champion Danny Popp. Fraser had his slowest run of the weekend, just five one hundredths of second too slow in the final, handing the win to Popp, Popp's third title.

Goodguys, based in Pleasanton, California, will once again open (and close) their season in Arizona this year, starting with the 8th Spring Nationals, March 10-12, 2017, once again at WestWorld in north Scottsdale. ■ —with John Drummond

The Top 12 Winner's Circle includes the Top 10 Builder's Choice Award Winner's Circle, with Custom of the Year chopped, nosed and decked 1954 Mercury two-door hardtop with original 292, belonging to Scott and Holly Roberts of Moorpark CA, up front. | We noticed that the Top 12 this year were heavy on black, beige and olive drab, a departure from the gumball collection most years. We're told these have been the current go-to colors for fashion and decorating and such. Apparently its magic had taken root in recent jobs and/or in the judges' eyes. Always the last ones to a fashion trend, we're pressing our khakis for the March event.



A few random memories from Goodguys (above, left to right, top to bottom) The modified 409 V8 at the heart of a Classic Chevy Pick-winning 1962 Chevrolet Bel Air 4-speed belonging to Bob and Kathy Cantwell of Phoenix. | US Mags-outfitted 1963 Chevy pickup belonging to Paul Tracy of Scottsdale won Cool Commercial. | Ron Wight's 1962 VW Single Cab (pickup) from Regina, Saskatchewan won Wild Card Just Cause It's Neat. | Dale Skorera of Appleton WI won Best Wide Whites with his immaculate black 1960 C1 Corvette. | 1935 Chevy Standard rod in Lamborghini yellow paint belonging to Jeff Beard of Midland TX won PPG Dream Car. | Dave Bertram of Scottsdale has owned his Memory Lane Award-winning 300-hp 1958 Pontiac Bonneville since 1985. | Jerry Logan of Hillsboro OR brought his stunning chopped and copper-bullet-laden custom 1960 Cadillac with ZL1 Ram Jet 454 V8, a Custom Rod of the Year Finalist and winner of Hot Rods by Dean Builder's Choice Award. Rumored cost was well into the hundreds of thousands. | Danny Popp of Cincinnati's 1972 C3 Corvette, winner of the Duel in the Desert and his third Goodguys AutoCross of the Year title. | This 1955 Chrysler Imperial convertible with 6.2L 392 V8 belonging to Wayne and Mary Ann Davis of Southlake TX won Goodguys Pick.