

# CLASSIC MUSCLE SHOWCASE IN MOTION

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Photo: Tim and Kristin Sharp

Each year, the Copperstate 1000 begins with a classic car show on the grass at Tempe Diablo Stadium. This year's field of some eighty rare vintage sports cars from Jaguar, Ferrari, Maserati, Porsche, Alfa Romeo, Shelby Cobra, Corvette, MG, Iso Rivolta, Aston Martin, De Tomaso, OSCA and Cisitalia.

While you can also see many of these rare machines at the Pebble Beach or Quail Lodge Concours during Monterey week in August, you will pay \$150-\$400 for admission. What does the Phoenix Art Museum Men's Arts Council (MAC) charge you to view these classic sports cars up close? Nothing—it is free to the public.

This is all part of the Men's Arts Council's plan to share these beautiful rolling sculptures with the state of Arizona and to expose them to future generations of car collectors. Evidently, MAC's plan is working, as we see more future collectors at the Tempe Field of Dreams each year. It is a wonderful way to inspire young collector enthusiasts. It is also a great way for adults to view the cars of their dreams.

The Men's Arts Council has had considerable help from the classic car owners themselves and corporate sponsors to make the Copperstate 1000 a success. This year's Bell Lexus Copperstate 1000 sponsors included AAA, the Arizona Department of Public Safety (DPS), Bell Lexus, U-Haul and others. Between the entrants' fees and corporate donations, the Copperstate 1000 raises funds for both the Phoenix Art Museum and the DPS 1090 Foundation to help families of fallen officers.

## THE COPPERSTATE 1000 ROAD RALLY EXPERIENCE

From Tempe, the parade of exotic vintage machines traveled over 1,000 miles in four days. This year's Copperstate 1000 route ran through Superior, Miami, Globe, Greer, Edgar, Alpine, Morenci, Holbrook, Winslow, Strawberry, Sedona, Flagstaff, Payson, Happy Jack and Paradise Valley. Along the way, the residents of some of Arizona's most remote towns got to enjoy the beauty of these rare sports cars.

Lest you think that the owners of these old sports cars are all millionaires, think again. Many are working stiffs who save all year and use their vacation days to run the rally. Lest you think that the owners of rare vintage cars are fat cats who are chauffeured in their classic cars, seriously rethink that notion. These are genuine enthusiasts who love to drive their vintage sports cars through the snow in the White Mountains, brave the cold in their old roadsters and pay for the privilege of doing it.

Why would they do this and what is their reward? you might ask. It is a combination of things. The camaraderie of fellow enthusiasts. Listening to your sports car's engine as you run through the gears. The sensation of speed as the wind rushes past your head. The thumbs-up signs from locals as you drive through a small town. The scenic beauty of the Red Rocks of Sedona and the pines of the Arizona high country. The satisfaction you get when your old sports car finishes the Copperstate 1000 without so much as a spark plug change. It is all of these things and more.

## RALLY SIGHTS AND SOUNDS

We settled into bucket seats of a Mustang GT we borrowed from Ford, and we checked out its retro dash. It sure looked like Ford's legendary 1970s GT muscle car, but would it run like one? No problem there. The GT's new 6-speed transmission and 412-horsepower quad-valve V8 put that issue to rest. This was the real deal, with an optional 19-inch tire and Brembo brake package for serious driving.

Of course, the NAV system, Sirius radio and backup camera were hardly retro. However, the NAV system might come in handy if we overshot the turnoff to our lunch stop at Happy Jack—which we did. It was not quite the same sensation as running back roads in a vintage Porsche Speedster, but the Mustang GT had excellent footing on the icy tarmac, and acceleration was nothing short of amazing.

Okay, so we did feel a little guilty that we were cozy inside the Mustang while the real Copperstate 1000 participants

Above: This 1956 Maserati 350 S belonging to Scott and Jody Rosen of N Salem NY is one of only three post-war racing Maserati Spyders built and the only surviving 350 S. Below: The Field of Dreams, at Tempe Diablo Stadium, brings a final shine to all the cars and a thrill to hundreds of spectators, before the rally hits the road.



Photo: Joe Sage

KEEP RIGHT >>



Photo: Tim and Kristin Sharp



Photos: Joe Sage [4]

Above: This 1972 Ferrari 365 GTB/4 Daytona Spyder is owned by Andy Manganaro of Xenia OH. It was originally a coupe but was converted to convertible spec by Mike Sheehan in 1973. Below: Newt and Ginnia Withers of Anaheim CA await the starting flags at Tempe, in their 1966 Ferrari 275 GTB/C6 with 6-carb 3.3L V12.



Photo: Joe Sage

were freezing in their vintage race cars. However, the feeling soon passed when we reached the snow country.

Having scouted for some good photo locations on the way to Happy Jack, we sprinted through lunch in order to get back there before the Copperstate drivers passed. It was easy knowing when the classic sports cars were coming down the hill—their distinctive engine sounds gave them away. Vintage Jaguars have a mellow sound, like a precision clockworks. A Porsche 356 has a guttural, throaty sound. At speed, the old OSCA and Maserati race car engines sounded like a band of angry Italian washer women ripping up wet sheets. Yes, we loved this sound the best.

Occasionally, a vintage sports car burning a little castor oil in its gasoline passed by. You could not only see and hear the cars, but you could also smell the distinctive aroma of castor beans—similar to freshly brewed coffee, but even sweeter to a true vintage racing aficionado. It is the





Photo: Tim and Kristin Sharp



Photos: Joe Sage [4]

Above: Copperstate 1000 drivers stopped at Happy Jack Lodge, northeast of Payson, for lunch on the last day of the rally. Manganaro's Ferrari is joined by a rebodied 1932 Lincoln KB Boattail Speedster belonging to Dale Lillard of Phoenix, plus many more. Below: the author's ride for the day: a 412-hp manual Ford Mustang GT.



Photo: Tim and Kristin Sharp

smell of speed.

After the last vintage sports car passed, only the sound of the occasional Harley-Davidson or diesel truck caught our attention. With most cars, the tire noise was louder than their exhaust note. As the hybrids passed, there was virtually no noise at all. How boring. We had a passing thought: "Why is it that we are constantly being pushed into automobiles that have no soul? Cars are becoming appliances. Perhaps the era of performance cars is gone. Perhaps classic sports cars are the last vestiges of that dying era."

We packed our camera bag and climbed into the Mustang GT. As its engine came to life, we reconsidered: "No, the performance car is definitely not dead." After resetting the gauges, we tracked the Mustang's mileage back home. It got 26.5 mpg from Strawberry to Gold Canyon. That's not bad for a car with 412 horses. Now, if they would only offer the Mustang GT with a bi-fuel option, you could run it on \$2.26-a-gallon CNG. ■

