

## Wine Country Classic

By Gil LeSage

No need to point out that one of the most colorful and complete events on the yearly Jag calendar is the Sears Point Wine Country Classic week-end (May 31-June 1 this year).

Think about all the fun it comprises: First, Dick France's tent party at our corral. Then, the other big tent just down the hill in the pits. I am speaking of the Wine Tasting Tent.

I love being able to walk in, do a little tasting and nibbling, then walk out to the stands and look down on the wide variety of classic race cars roaring around the immense track. Then, when there is a dull moment, walk back through the pits to check out what the various mechanics are doing.

I always stop and say hello to Vick Edelbrock, who is a fixture there with his red 18-wheeler. Can you imagine if each of us decided to race our car and we were backed up with all the tools and extra engines in a big rig?

I remember walking around the pits in 2006 and seeing our editor's black XK 120 FHC parked at the most inviting position of the Jaguar Dealership's tent. It was an invitation for us to come in, browse around, and look at the newest cars offered by Jaguar.

For those who have not yet participated in this unusual Saturday classic car and wine weekend, you will be glad to learn that there are small shuttle buses that take us to and from the car corral. And there is one more activity you will all want to know about...especially if you drive an E-type, an XK 120, 140 or 150: You can sign up for an early eve charity event that is among my top favorites.

Here is how it works: At 4:30 in the afternoon, you bring your pretty, show-ready car over to gate one of Infineon. You will see a few cars already lined up and pointing east. There will be some race cars and some show cars. The activity is limited to about 35 cars. At 5p.m sharp, two highway patrol cars guide all of us from the track to Sonoma Square. At 4-way stop signs, they block off the side streets so we can all stay together, without stopping, all the way up to the square. As you arrive at the square, you will see throngs of people there to receive each car with great applause. Along the way, many people step out on to their front porch to wave us by.

People line up all around the Sonoma plaza to greet us and cheer as we circle the entire square before pulling in to park. The very second you park, your car will be circled by the most enthusiastic car lovers you will ever meet. There is great excitement. The drivers feel it; the onlookers demonstrate it. Just as soon as you park your show car, you can get out, take your wine and food tickets as well as your souvenir wine glasses, and start imbibing and tasting chef prepared food. But get ready to feel frustrated.

I never know whether to taste wine or just walk around to look at cars and chat with the locals who are right at your car, ready to pose questions. Yes, the cars are paired to the event as the wine is to the food being offered. Each car owner and each person who gave a little to this charity event gets a ballot to choose his or her favorite car. The winner gets more than a trophy: there is also a magnum of champagne waiting.

Sound like a fun way to end a day at the races? Then join old Gil at gate 1 around 4:30 p.m.

But you will need to register to get your glass, tickets and windshield placard. I believe it is \$35. To register, please reach a lovely person who works for Infineon special events, Denise Silver. Mention me if you wish ("Gil with the red 120 convertible"). The sooner you sign up, the better are your chances of being among the 35 that race up to the Plaza escorted by the Highway Patrol.

To reach Denise, email her a note with your intention to register, including your name, year of car, type of classic show car or race car. She will respond to your e-mail or phone # and tell you how to make out the check. [dsilver@infineonraceway.com](mailto:dsilver@infineonraceway.com).

When you line up at gate 1, Saturday eve May 31st, someone will bring the wine glasses, the tickets and the window placard right to your car. If you see me there, come and say hello. One caveat: At 5:00 p.m., be ready for an accelerated heartbeat. Trust me on this.

P.S. One sad note this month for car innovators: Boyd Coddington passed on at age 63 in Whittier, California. He had the popular reality car show called "American Hot Rod." He was a prominent figure at all the Goodguys Car shows. At every Goodguys show, there was a "Boyd Coddington Pick" where he personally bestowed a ribbon on his favorite car or truck. Boyd recently hired Liz Miles (Miss Gearhead - I introduced you to her last year). I believe she is the first female hired by Boyd to work on custom cars.



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