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THE NINTH ANNUAL CLASSIC CHEVY CLUB TRI-FIVE EVENT

Text and photos by Bruce Caldwell

Collectible automobiles don't get much more iconic than Tri-Five Chevys—the years 1955, 1956, and 1957. The introduction of the revolutionary 1955 Chevy 265-cubic-inch V-8 engine and the stylish new cars and trucks that it powered started a high performance phenomenon that's still going strong. Tri-Five Chevys were extremely popular new and have remained so for over 50 years.

Members of the Northwest Classic Chevy Club attend many shows, but they also produce purportedly the world's largest 1955 to 1957-only show. The show has been held for the past nine years in Issaquah, Washington (a Seattle suburb) at the historic XXX Root Beer Drive-In. The giant root beer barrel sign is readily visible from I-90, so the venue is easy to find.

The Tri-Five show is held on the third Sunday in

August and draws upwards of 300 cars and trucks from all up and down the West Coast, including Canada. Cars also regularly drive over from eastern Washington, Idaho, and Montana. This year a spectator came all the way from France to see the show. The show is very relaxed with only a modest number of trophies and participant picks. The large, tree-lined parking lot makes it possible for the various award winners to circle the lot as the awards are announced.

The Northwest Classic Chevy Club Tri-Five Show is a simple, one-day outdoor show with the goal of drawing as many 1955-57 Chevys together in one place as possible. If you like Tri-Five Chevys this is the place to be. The following cars and trucks are a small sampling of the many great rides that attended the 2008 event. The 2009 event will be August 16 if you can make it!



The centerpiece Corvette was Jim and Denise Clark's 270-hp, dual-quad 1957. Greg Ferreira applied the Cascade Green and Shoreline Beige paint. The Corvette is one of 654 four-speed-equipped cars.



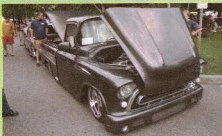
The 1955 representative of the centerpiece display was this Del Rio two-door sedan that belongs to Neal West. Engine displacement is now nearly double the factory V-8 thanks to a GM Performance Parts Ram Jet injected 502-cubic-inch Chevy big-block.



Bob and Carole Turk's radical Rosewood 1955 Nomad from Cannon Beach, Oregon typified the high caliber of cars at the show. The engine and transmission came from a 1995 Corvette, while a 1992 Corvette provided the front and rear suspension. 2000 Corvette 17-inch wheels roll on Toyo tires and are stopped by Baer disc brakes. A Toyota Avalon supplied the power seats.



Tri-Five Chevy pickups were part of the show. Dave and Michelle Nelson parked their 1955 by the main entrance, but you couldn't miss the House of Kolor Tangelo and Violet Purple truck no matter where it was. The engine is a 454 big-block stroked to 488 cubic inches. Air bag suspension keeps the stance low. The stock grille was replaced by a 1957 unit.



Easily the wildest truck at the show was this extensively modified 1957 Cameo owned by Dave and Sandy Forman. A road racing theme was aided by a custom chassis, 19x12-inch (front) and 19x14-inch (rear) Makaveli wheels with 15-inch Brembo rotors and 8-piston calipers. The tires are by Pirelli. The polished aluminum Brodix 434 stroker engine runs two intercooled turbochargers.



There were lots of Nomads at the show, but there were also many other cool wagons, such as this white over red 1957 150 two-door Handyman that belongs to Dan Jubia. A lowered hood and Torq-Thrust wheels added to the hot rod look. The hot rod go power was in the form of a four-bolt main 350 with an Edelbrock intake and a Demon carburetor. The wagon has a Nova front clip.



Not all the cars in attendance were show quality stunners—there were plenty of nice drivers and even an area for unfinished project cars.



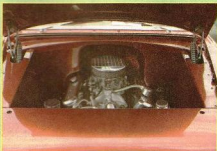
Gary Monette modified his 1956 convertible, but it still underwent a full frame-off restoration. The striking color combination is Dark Cherry Pearl in front with Dark Bronze Metallic Pearl in the spears and on the rear end of the car. The engine is a 370-horse 327 backed by a 700-R4 automatic. The 18-inch and 17-inch wheels are from Boyd Coddington.



The beautiful August weather was perfect for top-down cruising in Duane and Mary Quande's Tropical Turquoise 1957 Bel Air convertible. The car is an original numbers-matching 283 Power Pack, Powerglide, power brakes, and power steering model. It was also equipped with the Wonderbar radio and auxiliary bumper guards.



The trunk of this 1955 210 was super slick. The fully carpeted trunk had several handy storage areas. The hinged compartment on the left houses detailing supplies, tools, and a flashlight. A CD player is built into the rear bulkhead with a 1955 Chevy speaker grille. A carpeted insert dresses up the spare tire.



Jim Moore has a very clean engine compartment in his 1955 Bel Air hardtop thanks to a unique radiator shield and custom-built inner fender panels. The recessed firewall is void of any protuberances. The radiator valence is fitted to the top of the grille for an extra smooth look.



The trunk of Ray Mohoff's 1956 Bel Air hardtop was done in charcoal and black to match the body paint. All the panels were upholstered including the inside of the trunk lid and even the hinges.



Another wild Chevy that needed a hole in the hood to clear a monster blower was this 1957 Bel Air hardtop owned by Cevin Waffle. The ground-hugging Pro Street car has been around for several years, but it still looks fresh. The polished BDS 6-71 supercharger tops a detailed big-block. A low radiator and lack of the factory radiator brace help showcase the blower belt and pulleys.



By far the most popular "look" at the Tri-Five show was keeping the exterior very close to original and then adding modern running gear, custom wheels, high performance tires, and contemporary interior amenities. A good example of this approach is Bill King's 1955 210 sedan. An L71 sits under the hood, but instead of fuel injection it has a brace of Edelbrock four-barrel carburetors.



The hood had to be cut to clear the tall injector stacks on Ron Reiferstahl's 1956 Bel Air two-door sedan. The 468 motor is backed by a Turbo 400 trans and a Gear Vendors overdrive unit. The 9-inch Ford rear end houses 4.11 gears and Dutchman axles. The color combo is black and candy red, with an ostrich-leather accented, black leather interior.



Charlene McGinn's bright red pickup is a 1956 Cameo even though it sports the more attractive 1957-58 bed side trim. It still has the "egg crate" 1956 grille and the front fender model number is 3100, not 3124 as it would be if the truck were a 1957. All the rear bumper, spare tire cover, tailgate, and taillight components were beautifully restored.



A wild engine of the factory variety is this dual quad equipped, 245-hp, 283 small-block in Frank Geyer's beautiful Matador Red 1957 Bel Air convertible. The totally loaded, fully restored convertible has 24 factory options including power steering, power brakes, 3.36:1 posi rear end, dual exhaust, Wonderbar radio, electric wipers, electric clock, and the rare and unusual vacuum ashtray. Frank has owned the car since 1971.