



Sales Director Terry McGinnis takes in the Grand National Roadster Show

By Terry McGinnis

It was cold and snowy in the Heartland during the last week of January. I didn't mind because I was in southern California. I had conspired with my friends at Midwest Hot Rods to attend the Grand National Roadster Show in Pomona, CA, outside LA. We had decided to make a guy's road trip out of it and see as much hot-rod related stuff as we could in four days. (Can you still call it a road trip if you fly?)

Eight of us flew out of Chicago's O'Hare field on a very cold Thursday morning. We arrived at LAX to find a sunny 68 degrees welcoming us. After retrieving our rental car we proceeded directly to the Peterson Automotive Museum in downtown LA. The Peterson is a very classy museum filled with many displays of automotive history. I highly recommend visiting if you get the chance.

After a few hours at the museum someone in the group found a number for George Barris' shop. We called it and George himself answered. He said he was preparing to close up for the day, but if we were coming he would wait for us. George Barris is known as the King of the Kustomizers. He is famous for doing TV and movie cars, such as the Batmobile and the Munster Coach. Well, he was true to his word and allowed us to look around his shop at his collection of movie memorabilia. He also has several cars in his showroom, including Batmobile #1 and KITT, the Firebird from the Knight Rider TV series. When someone asked George a question about one of the movie stars in one of the hundreds of framed photos on the wall, he began telling stories. Two and a half hours later George had told us tales of stars from Clark Gable to Michael Jackson. He then posed for pictures with all of us and sent us on our way smiling.

Friday started out with a great breakfast and got better from there. Unbeknownst to me, a good customer of Midwest Hot Rods knows somebody who knows somebody and managed to get us invited to tour every car-guy's dream—Jay Leno's garage. It is everything you've heard and more. What an amazing collection! 110,000 square feet of automotive coolness! The only thing that could have made that better was Jay himself being there. But, oh well. From Jay's, we went to find Hollywood Hot Rods. Unfortunately, it was closed. However, right next door was Old Crow Speed Shop. What a cool place.

This is a shop that works on only old-school hot rods. The place is full of 30s and 40s cars and parts. The building and its contents look like they were lifted straight out of the 1950s. The guys treated us like guests and we took a lot of pictures. The pictures should probably be in black and white to look correct. From there it was off to a quick lunch. After lunch we buzzed over to So-Cal Speed Shop to tour their shop. Someone there told us about a business called Early Ford Parts located not too far away. We checked it out and found another time warp. It was an old store in downtown San Dimas, CA. It had old car parts hanging from the rafters and stacked on shelves. Squeezed in between were a few complete cars. Everything in there predated WWII. What a gas! The last thing on the agenda for Friday was going to the cruise night at Bob's Big Boy in West Hollywood. The restaurant on Riverside Drive is the oldest continuously running Big Boy in the chain. The cruise night is a tradition almost as old as the restaurant itself. The weather was great. The turnout was great. The cars were great. We went back to the hotel tired and happy.

Saturday started with a very early trip to a local donut shop, which is the weekly gathering spot for a car club known as The Donut Derelicts. What started out as a few guys meeting for Saturday breakfast has turned into a weekly car show. We were not disappointed by what we found. About 200 cars filled the parking lot of a small shopping center. Many cool rides kept us entertained for a couple of hours. Finally it was time to take off for the main reason we planned this trip—The Grand National Roadster Show. This show is considered to be the Grand Daddy of all the indoor custom car shows. For more than 50 years many of the top car builders have competed for the show's top award—America's Most Beautiful Roadster. Attending this show is on the bucket list of car guys all over the world. Now we can scratch it off our lists. Nine buildings plus outside displays of some of the best hot rods, customs, and motorcycles in the country gave us plenty to look at and study. We stayed until they kicked us out. We went back to the hotel tired, hurting and happy.

Sunday morning we had enough time to go back to the fairgrounds to visit the NHRA museum. This museum is dedicated to the history of America's racing heritage and is a wonderful spot to learn about the roots of all aspects of motorsports in our country. It was a fitting last stop on our trip.

I am pleased to be able to represent Superior Car Parts on these trips. This is a tough job but somebody's got to do it! Enjoy the ride.



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