



By Richard Truesdell

**T**he annual San Marino Motor Classic (SMMC) assembled another outstanding field in its seventh running. A diverse mix of more than 350 vehicles, including brass-era cars, American Classics, sports cars, hot rods, muscle cars, and more spread out over the spacious grounds of San Marino's Lacy

Park (near Pasadena).

This year's Muscle Car and Pony Car classes were especially strong, with more than 30 cars invited by class co-chairmen Joe Salvo and Paul Ginsburg.

"For cars that will be judged, we try and hold a strict line of integrity in that we are looking for original cars, not modified cars," Joe explains. "Every

now and then a car will slip by the process, but for the most part only original and original-equipped cars are what the SMMC is looking for. We have a little more wiggle room if the car is not going to be judged, however. The SMMC does try and take as many cars as we can, since we are raising money for charity at the end of the day."

This year the show raised more than \$300,000 for the Pasadena Humane Society & SPCA, the Rotary Club of San Marino, and the USC Trojan Marching Band. To date, the event has raised \$1.6 million for charity.

Here's a look at some of the outstanding muscle and pony cars that came out for the SMMC.

## 2017 SAN MARINO MOTOR CLASSIC RESULTS, MUSCLE CAR & PONY CAR CLASSES

### Class N1 American Big-Block Muscle Cars 1962-1974 GM

1. **Frank & Laura Rodrigues**  
1965 Chevrolet Chevelle Z-16

2. **Dan Bishop**  
1970 Chevrolet Chevelle LS6

3. **Keith Watkins**  
1969 Chevrolet Chevelle SS Coupe

### Class N2 American Big-Block Muscle Cars 1962-1974 non-GM

1. **John Karelus**  
1964 Ford Fairlane Thunderbolt

2. **Peter Treglia**  
1970 Dodge Challenger

3. **Les Juhos**  
1965 Dodge Hemi Coronet

### Class N3 American Big-Block Muscle Cars 1962-1974 Open

1. **Robert Cassling**  
1968 Shelby G.T. 500KR

2. **Dann Allen**  
1969 Mercury Cougar

3. **Mark Rice**  
1969 Ford Galaxie 500 XL

### Class V Pony Cars Through 1973

1. **Bruce Meyer**  
Shelby G.T. 350

2. **Jim Mikkelsen**  
1969 Chevrolet Camaro

3. **James Powers**  
1967 Mercury Cougar

# MUSCLE CAR TURNOUT

## 2017 San Marino Motor Classic



**“To date, the event has raised \$1.6 million for charity”**

OPENING PHOTO COURTESY OF KAHN MEDIA



### John and Martha Karelius 1964 Ford Fairlane 427 Thunderbolt

Not only did this 1964 Ford Fairlane Thunderbolt earn First place in its class, it was also awarded our *Muscle Car Review* trophy as the SMMC's top muscle car.

“My early Thunderbolt is one the documented 100 produced and is one of the few remaining examples,” John explains. He says Ford delivered these “Thunder-

bolt” Fairlane 500s to Dearborn Steel Tubing as K-code, High Performance 289, four-speed cars. They arrived less the engine and transmission. By ordering the K-code engine, the car was shipped with larger brakes and the Ford 9-inch differential.

At Dearborn Steel Tubing, the chassis was modified to accommodate a 427 High Riser FE engine with two four-barrel carburetors. The original steel hood and front quarter-panels were replaced with

fiberglass panels. A special teardrop hood was used to accommodate the massive 427. “The radio, heater, defroster, side mirror, and door panel armrests were deleted,” John says. “Rubber floor mats, a single driver’s sun visor, single driver’s windshield wiper, single driver’s seat belt and lightweight Bostrom Thinline racing seats were added. The Thunderbolts were also delivered with drag racing slicks as standard equipment.”



### Frank and Laura Rodrigues 1965 Chevrolet Chevelle Z-16

Frank and Laura's gorgeous Z-16 Chevelle was voted First place in Class N1. "This is a very rare Chevelle Z-16, the first Chevys to get the then-new 396 big-block," says Frank. "Just 201 were built in 1965, and it's one of 76 that we know are left in existence."

He bought the car from Jerry Huffman, "who has the Z-16 that he had in high school. This restoration took four years, done by Chris Daniels, who is one of the noted experts on the Z-16 Chevelles. He still has two Z-16s



of his own that he bought back in the 1970s and has restored several. I assisted with the restoration, and I can say that it was truly a labor of love."

Says Frank, "What's noteworthy is that at one time this car was owned by the automotive writer, Terry Boyce. I have some photos and documents of the car that goes back to the time he owned the car."



### Ward Grappa 1970 Chevrolet Chevelle LS6

"My Chevelle was sold new in Albuquerque, New Mexico, on June 6, 1970, at Ed Black's Chevrolet Center to Tom White," explains Ward. "Tom was a 19-year-old pharmacy major at the University of New Mexico. The purchase price of this car was \$4,454.60. Tom used this Chevelle as daily transportation until late 1980. By that time, it had acquired 91,000 miles. Tom's four daughters came home from the hospital as newborn babies in this car."

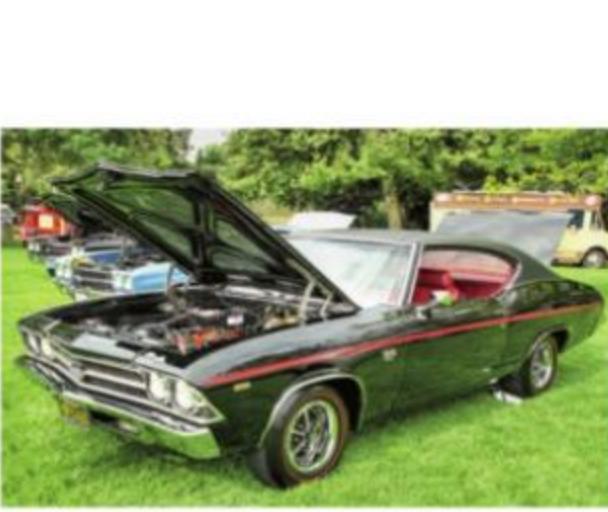
In early 1981, White sold his LS6 to its second owner, Greg Compagnone, also from Albuquerque, for \$4,500. "Greg drove this LS6 infrequently

and kept it until late 1984," says Ward. "He had the rings and bearings replaced in the engine because of excessive oil consumption, and had a 'Mop and Glow' paint job done because the original paint job was faded."

Ward has his car's full owner history: "In 1984 this LS6 passed to Jerry Cogswell, its third owner, for \$5,500. From late 1984 until late 2001, Jerry put less than 1,000 miles on this car. At the time I purchased this Chevelle on January 13, 2002, it had traveled 95,575 miles. A complete, 2,000-hour, body-off restoration was finished by me in February 2003. All components are numbers- and date-code matching. Documentation includes the original Protect-o-Plate warranty folder and the new car purchase order."

### Keith Watkins 1969 Chevrolet Chevelle SS396

Keith says, "I've owned the car for three years now. I purchased it from a restorer



in Atlanta who purchased it from the original owner. The car underwent a frame-on cosmetic restoration prior to me buying it. Once I bought it, I went through the car again to finish up all the fine details and get the car as close to original as possible. This included new fenderwells, OE battery and cables, OE spark plug wires, N.O.S. fuel pump, N.O.S. AM/FM radio, upgraded OE gauge package, N.O.S. tilt column, and all new correct hoses and clamps."

Keith says it's been "a ton of fun working on and enjoying this time capsule. The car has the original engine, transmission, rearend, carb, snorkel air cleaner, brakes, and sports its correct 789 Tuxedo Black paint, along with correct 11C Garnet Red interior. All the glass ex-

cept the windshield is original to the car, along with the original body panels. Inside the car smells like steel and vinyl and takes me back to my childhood every time I go for a spin."



### John Chencharick 1970 Ford Torino Cobra

"I purchased this original, numbers-matching car with 24,000 miles in 2005," John tells us. "It now has 26,000 miles. I documented the mileage by contacting the second and third owners. The engine internals were documented by engine master Jim Van Gordon, and the transmission was inspected by John Saltzman. The original torque converter was also inspected. The engine compartment was detailed by



### Robert Cassling 1968 Shelby G.T. 500KR

Robert's "King of the Road" Shelby was voted top in the N3 class. "I purchased my KR convertible approximately three years ago following a five-year search for a black KR convertible with a four-speed transmission," Robert says. "Little did I know this was quite a rare combination, as there were only 18 made in this configuration. Having a black top made it even rarer, with a total production of only five triple-black KR convertibles."

He first spotted the car on television, at a Mecum auction.



"After years of fruitless searching, I gave Mecum a call, and they gave me information on the owner. It turned out that he lived only five miles from me! So the transaction was easy. The car was rotisserie restored by a well-known Shelby restorer and won gold awards at SAAC and Team Shelby in 2016. I think my car's greatest attribute is its rarity."



### Bruce Meyer 1965 Shelby G.T. 350

The winner in Class V for Pony Cars was noted car collector Bruce Meyer for his first-year G.T. 350. "It's truly one of my favorites, which I've owned for 30 years," he says. "It was restored almost 30 years ago by Cliff Lipke in Colorado and driven ever since. It's been on the California Classic Rally as well as the Copperstate 1000 Rally. This car does it all: com-

fortable, old-school fast, and handles like a dream. Very predictable with no surprises."

Bruce says the G.T. 350 "is a pure American automotive piece of art. A California hot rod Mustang in the traditional American color scheme perfected by Briggs Cunningham, white with blue stripes. In addition to its wonderful aesthetic, it dominated on the race track as well. It won multiple SCCA B/Production championships. It's everything a Shelby should be."

**"It was restored almost 30 years ago and driven ever since"**

John Coute's Arrow Auto Air in San Bernardino, California. The painting was done by Rounsville's in San Bernardino, California. Parts were supplied by Jeff Sneathen at SEMO Mustangs, and any technical detail information was furnished by Phil LaChapelle."

John says he has been "actively involved with most phases of the restoration from either a hands-on or research aspect. The originality of the car is its most amazing attribute. It was invited to the Fabulous Fords event to celebrate the 45th anniversary of the Torino and has just been invited back for the 50th celebration."

### Mark Rice 1969 Ford Galaxie 500XL

Mark bought his Galaxie in 1979 "for \$400 out of an ad placed in *Hemmings*. It was in a repair shop where it had been parked for five years. It was the first car that I brought back, and I drove it after doing some valvetrain work on the original motor."



The Galaxie "had no rear glass and had been out in the rain for four years, so it had lots of rust," says Mark. "The entire floor section had to be cut out of another 1969 convertible. It also needed the right door and trunk lid replaced."

Mark's Galaxie was born with a K-code 429 two-barrel that came with a single exhaust. "I upgraded it to a 460ci crate motor in 1985. I never liked the way it ran—no bottom end. A man in Signal Hill [California] began the rebuild of the 460 in 1999 with the correct DOV-C heads from a 429. It is completely balanced and port-matched with Cobra Jet cast-iron headers. I restored the car myself with the exception of the paint and upholstery. It was painted in late 1989 and still has that paint on it. It's been a part of my life for the last 38 years."



### Christopher Sullivan 1968 Shelby G.T. 500

"Mine is a true Los Angeles Shelby G.T. 500," says Christopher. "It was originally purchased from Downey Ford, Downey, California. It was built on December 21, 1967, and received at Downey Ford on January 11, 1968. It's all factory-correct, matching-numbers with its original, unrestored factory interior. It has benefited from a six-year rotisserie restoration process—every nut and bolt—using all the actual parts that came on the car wherever possible."

Christopher's Shelby has its original black and yellow California-issued license plates with the original Downey Ford license plate frame. "This dealer frame was the personal frame of the original owner of Downey Ford, Mr. Graham Sr., which was given to me by his son, Mr. Jim Graham from Santa Margarita Ford. He told me, 'So you own the green hot rod. I knew that car when I was 14 years old running around my father's shop!'"

The Shelby (#00909) was raced at Lions Drag Strip in Long Beach, California, and at the Riverside International Raceway. "It took many years to get the G.T. 500 to the level it is today. And I really enjoy driving it around Venice Beach."

### Margaret Alley 1966 Shelby G.T. 350

"In 1967 my husband Paul and I traded our VW Beetle and a little bit of cash to one of our neighbors for this car," Margaret recalls. "My husband would drive it to work, racing on the Long Beach freeway. He loved it, he wanted a muscle car so bad. He loved fast cars. Together we drove it in slaloms, time trials, and gymkhanas."



Over the last couple of years, "I dug it out of storage and had Mike Abssy of Schraders' Speed and Style in Azusa, do all the work. It is a true muscle car; no power brakes and no power steering. You just muscle it around, which I do about once a week."

We shot a video of Margaret at the show and posted it on Facebook. "As I left Lacy Park on the day of the show, that video must have gone viral," Margaret tells us. "As we drove the car off the field, people were shouting at me, 'You're the real little old lady from Pasadena.'"



### Robin Grove 1964 1/2 Ford Mustang

"Salli, my 1964 1/2 Mustang convertible, found me through a friend whose father, M. E. Evans, had just passed away," Robin explains. "I am the car's second owner. Mr. Evans bought his wife a present for her birthday, which was a triple-black, fully loaded, Tiffany-advertised, hot-off-the-assembly line Mustang."

Robin says the engine had some problems in later years, so it became a father-son project. "Somehow they never finished it, and it sat in their garage for 30 years, all parts in boxes and accounted for."

"My first car was a black, 1964 1/2 Mustang, and over the years because of that, I was named Mustang Salli," she continues. "Hence, when my Mustang found me, she had to be named Salli. Salli's a babe, and we girls always stick together."