

Carlisle Car Shows

Collectors, Cars & Their Stories

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Carlisle Ford Nationals

“Twenty years of producing automotive events has enabled us to develop a fine-tuned system for creating and producing shows which meet all the desires and expectations of our attendees,” said Bill. “The Carlisle All-Ford Nationals was created this year to satisfy demands from all our Ford enthusiasts.” Chip added, “Space reservations to date project that this event will open as the largest new niche-market event which Carlisle has ever produced. More than 1,500 vendor spaces have already been sold and pre-registration for the show field has exceeded 500 Fords.” When it opened with 700 vehicles in 1995 it was indeed the most successful first-year show in Carlisle history.

Showcased were historical race cars, the centerpiece of which was Mark Kuykendall’s personal collection of Ford’s first factory drag cars. Dick Brannan, the head of Ford’s drag racing team, had to find ways to keep Ford competitive on the drag strip so that dealers could stay competitive in the consumer market. After modifying the cars to a lighter weight his racing team won at strips all over the country. Eventually he sold the cars to several dealers and collectors, and the cars got scattered.

Kuykendall of Asheville, NC set out to collect them, now known as the “Fearsome Four.” The drag cars included a 1962 Galaxie 402 Lightweight, the first factory lightweight Ford ever built; a 1963 Galaxie 427 Lightweight, the first Ford to hold a National Super Stock record, beating Chevy’s 409 and a 1964 A/FX Falcon, only two of which were built and which Brannan ran in the mid to low 11s; and a 1964 Thunderbolt Fairlane 426 High-



Evidence of a car that came from California to attend the All Ford Nationals in 2005.

Riser, Brannan's favorite as he liked cars to which the average guy could relate. As a bonus, Dick Brannan was also on hand to sign autographs. Although modified throughout the racing season and even afterward, all four cars were restored to their original configurations on their last day of competition. This was the first time these cars were ever displayed together in public.

A feature of the first Ford show was a head-to-head competition at South Mountain Raceway between two of the premier drag racers, Bruce Larson and Dick Brannan. They each drove '95 Mustang Cobra R models. Ford's Special Vehicle Team installed the powerful Windsor V-8 engine in the 1995 SVT Mustang Cobra R, and as a result the car was featured in almost every major automotive magazine in North America. Only 225 were ever built. They were limited to two per dealer and only available through SVT dealerships. Buyers had to provide proof in the form of an SSCA, NHRA, or IMSA driver certificate.

Special Guests

Larry Shinoda, who was the designer credited with the '63 split rear window Corvette, found more acclaim as the designer of the Boss 302 Mustang. After a few years



NASCAR Hall of Famer and decorated WWII veteran Bud Moore visited Carlisle three times.

at GM, he followed his friend Bunkie Knudsen to Ford, where he'd started his automotive design career, and took with him his special brand of frankness and car-guy cool. His work on the 1969 and 1970 Ford Mustang Boss 302 is all the evidence that statement requires. He signed autographs at the Carlisle All Ford Nationals in August 1997. He died in November of that year at age 67.

NASCAR driver Ned Jarrett was at the 2002 show with the newly restored '66 Fairlane #11, the last race car he had ever driven in competition. Jarrett, known widely as Gentleman Ned

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