

# Club Scene

By Mark Langton



## FANS OF FOUR WHEELS

Car clubs around the Conejo rev up their rides.

**MOST OF US CHOSE THE CAR WE DRIVE FOR ITS EFFICIENCY AND STYLING.** But then there are those who have chosen to have a relationship with their cars. Call them collectors, enthusiasts, or crazy, but one thing's for sure: these folks appreciate cars for more than transportation. They see them as works of art, or perhaps a living legacy of a bygone era. And it's only natural that these people would want to join others whose passion is fueled by history and horsepower.

Car club members are certainly fanatical about their cars, but they're not always your dirt-under-the-fingernails mechanic types. Lauren Rheaume, a single mom living in Westlake Village, says she simply set out to find "a convertible that was fast." What she found—stumbled upon, actually—was a somewhat rare 1978 Porsche 911 SC Targa. She knew that she'd found her car when the mechanic she had check it out told her, "If you don't buy it, I will!"



Considered the pinnacle of historic car shows, the Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance exhibits some of the finest automotive art in the country, like the 2005 Best of Show winner, a 1937 Delage D8-120 S Pourtout Aréo Coupé. Photo courtesy of Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance.

But once she had the car, Rheaume realized, "I needed to know more about how to maintain it, what the right parts were for it, and who are the good mechanics in the area—because I know *nothing* about cars. That's what's so great about my club [Porsche Club of America, Santa Barbara Region; [www.pcasb.org](http://www.pcasb.org)]*—the members love to share their knowledge. And as I began to appreciate its lineage, not only did I realize I had a collector car, I felt that I had the responsibility to maintain its heritage.*"

We've got clubs in the area dedicated to everything from the Ford Model A to the Nissan Z, from sports cars to classic cars to hot rods, and everything in between. Preservation and restoration is a mainstay with most clubs, but others are about modification and speed. Yet they all have one thing in common: sharing the love of their vehicles with others. And as it turns out, people who like cars also usually like each other. Says Ron Cowan, president of Ventura Vintage Rods (805-389-0301 or [www.venturavintagerods.org](http://www.venturavintagerods.org)), "The cars are the common bond out of which so many of our club members' friendships have evolved." And joining a car club can easily become a family affair. Clubs hold all kinds of family-friendly outings, and if you have kids, a restoration project can be both fun and educational.

The other thing that car clubs have in common is getting out on the road. Custom and classic clubs hold weekly "cruises" that might end up at a local museum or restaurant and last only a few hours, or they might go for longer weekend cruises. And of course they attend—and compete in—area car shows. Sports car clubs can usually be found doing "fun runs" up and down the coast—our mountain and canyon roads are perfect for testing the handling and performance that these drivers adore.

And you don't have to be an enthusiast to be a member of a car club. In fact, many people join a particular club as part of their fact-finding mission once they have settled on a car they think they might want to purchase. Car clubs are also great places to look for

cars and accessories for sale. There are literally dozens of clubs in the greater Santa Barbara, Ventura, and Los Angeles areas, sporting just about every make, model, and category imaginable. Car shows are usually part of a larger event, so if you're looking for something fun and educational to do, check out one of several enthusiast shows coming up over the next few months.

We even have two well-stocked local car museums that are open to the public. Most of Vintage Museum's diverse collection of cars and motorcycles was selected by Otis Chandler, who was world-renowned for his knowledge of and passion for motor vehicles. Cars include classics from Duesenberg, Packard, and Stutz, as well as antiques such as a 1905 Panhard, a 1906 Thomas Flyer, and a 1912 Oldsmobile Limited. There are also several rare sports cars, as well as a fascinating array of vintage motorcycles. The Vintage Museum is located at 1421 Emerson Ave. in Oxnard. The museum has select Public Open House days so visit [www.chandlerwheels.com](http://www.chandlerwheels.com) for days and hours of operation.

And the non-profit Murphy Auto Museum houses over 50 cars on loan from collectors from the tri-county area, including a wide variety of classic, milestone, and special interest vehicles, as well as a large collection of Packards from 1927 to 1958. The Murphy Auto Museum is located at 2230 Statham Blvd. in Oxnard; call 805-487-4333 or visit [www.murphyautomuseum.com](http://www.murphyautomuseum.com).

Need another reason to join a car club? Collectible cars usually appreciate (unlike what you're probably driving now); choose wisely, and you'll probably sell it for more than you bought it for. And it's way more fun than trading stocks. ■

One of the largest local car shows is the Ventura Show presented by German Auto-Fest, a celebration of everything Porsche.



### PLACES TO GO

If you're thinking of joining a car club, or just want to find out more about a particular car—no matter what kind of car—there's bound to be a club for you. A good place to start is the SoCal Car Culture Directory at [www.socalcarculture.com](http://www.socalcarculture.com). Another way to find a club—and maybe your next car—is to check out a local show. Rock 'N Rod California ([www.calcarshows.com](http://www.calcarshows.com)) has a huge listing of shows all over Southern California. We've also compiled a list of local shows that are sure to get your motor running.

**Knights of Columbus 19th Annual Chili Cookoff and Car Show**  
June 11  
Classic cars, custom cars  
St. Rose of Lima School  
1305 Royal Ave., Simi Valley  
805-526-7960

**Santa Ynez Classic**  
June 11  
Classic German cars  
Dunn School, Los Olivos  
805-688-8922  
[www.santaynezclassic.com](http://www.santaynezclassic.com)

**2006 Seabee Days**  
June 24  
Street rods, classic cars  
Naval Base Ventura County  
Port Hueneme, Oxnard  
805-982-4392  
[www.nbvc.navy.mil/seabee-days](http://www.nbvc.navy.mil/seabee-days)

**Sespe Creek Car Show & Festival**  
(formerly Star Spangled Car Show)  
July 4  
Pre-1974, all makes and models  
Downtown Fillmore  
805-524-2546  
[www.fwry.com](http://www.fwry.com)

**Woodies at the Beach**  
August 19  
Classic "woodies"  
Santa Barbara Community College  
805-529-5780  
[www.nationalwoodieclub.com](http://www.nationalwoodieclub.com)

**56th Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance**  
August 20  
Prewar and postwar automobiles along with the latest in concept car designs  
The Lodge at Pebble Beach, Pebble Beach  
831-622-1700  
[www.pebblebeachconcours.net](http://www.pebblebeachconcours.net)

**Ventura Show presented by German AutoFest**  
September 9-10  
Porsche automobiles  
Seaside Park, Ventura  
661-296-6545  
[www.german-autofest.com](http://www.german-autofest.com)

**Harbor Run 16**  
September 10  
Street rods, custom cars, and classics 1975 and earlier  
Channel Islands Harbor, Oxnard  
805-389-0301  
[www.venturavintagerods.org](http://www.venturavintagerods.org)

**Westlake Village Auto Show**  
October 1  
All makes and models  
Westlake Village  
805-370-0035  
[www.westlakevillageautoshow.com](http://www.westlakevillageautoshow.com)