



River City Needed a Band with 76 Trombones, but Tiburon Needed a Car Show with Classic Cars!

by Tom O'Neill, Director — Tiburon Classic Car Show

In the world of mathematics, one fundamental formula has to do with combining two things to equal something else. In the case of a town like Tiburon that formula looks something like: NBS + MLBC = TCCS. Written out, this says that Naturally Beautiful Surroundings + Many Local Beautiful Cars = the Tiburon Classic Car Show. While some things seem obvious in hindsight, they are often paved by one small incident after another.

In 2001, the Town of Tiburon completely renovated its main street. The street, conveniently known as Main Street, was redesigned with a village-like meandering feel to it that incorporated broader sidewalks, the use of brick in several locations, new signs and a general softening of the overall appearance. The Town put on a Grand Opening celebration with the street closed to traffic so residents could stroll the new street and have a town party. The mayor at the time, knowing a few of us had “old cars” asked us to bring them down.

About five car owners brought their cars and it became quickly apparent that the cars enjoyed more than equal attention from residents as the new street. Humbly speaking, I mentioned to the mayor that the cars seemed to steal the show. He said, “Maybe you should start a car show.” I met Bruce Ross for the first time that day, he with his Porsche 356 Roadster and me with my Austin Healey 100 Roadster and we enjoyed exchanging car stories. Bruce and I met a week later and agreed to start a car show the next year. We instantly shared a vision and ultimately the mission of the show. Our show was to be a: **CELEBRATION OF CLASSIC CARS** that combined the natural beauty of our waterfront community with the fact that so many local residents had beautiful cars stashed away in their garages. “*Garage treasures,*” we called them. Our concept was to provide a venue for car owners to bring out their treasures to be seen in a place where the community families could enjoy them.



The first show in 2002 was held on Main Street with 32 cars. The true fulfillment of our mission occurred that first year with a spectrum of cars from a wonderfully restored 50's VW Bug to a 40's era Mercedes Benz open touring car that had been Hermann Goring's personal car—the price difference between the two was roughly a million dollars. Having reached Main Street's capacity on our first try, in 2003 we moved the show to the Waterfront Park where it is today. By closing Paradise Drive we raised our capacity to around 100 cars and were quite happy with our second show as our numbers grew to 49 cars. Our goal has never been to build a big show, but rather a high-quality show of limited numbers. We missed 2004 due to some local political issues that were smoothed over in time for the 2005 show

which grew to just over 60 cars.

The 2006 show marked the beginning of our popular practice of having a featured marque manufacturer. Our local resident, Tom Price owner of Price Family Dealerships, provided prime sponsorship and the featured marque of Aston Martin. In 2007, the marque sponsor was Porsche sponsored by HiTech Auto of San Rafael and featured our own Bruce Ross' 356 Super 90 race car. Our participant numbers jumped up into the high 70s. Because of the unique car culture area in which we live, we have at our doorstep something rather unusual. The only Ferrari factory owned dealership in the United States is located 5 miles away in Mill Valley. Our 2008 show featured Ferrari and Maserati and was sponsored by Ferrari/Maserati of San Francisco. A reasonable estimate is we had over 50 million dollars worth of Ferraris on the street that day headlined by a '62 GTO and a '59 Testa Rosa—both set up as pure race cars. We overflowed the street with a count of 96 registrants and some unofficially registered Ferraris brought the total to 109 cars.

And for 2009 the Mini Cooper is our featured marque and BMW/Mini of San Francisco is the main sponsor. This is the 50 year anniversary of Mini and possibly no car better fits our mission concept of celebrating cars for all people. With over 5 million original Minis built, they were truly the car for everyone; yet because of their unique design they were also capable, with some engine and suspension tweaking, to literally attack and intimidate the racing and rally world throughout the 1960's with the Mini Cooper S. Our featured car is an original S model owned by local resident, John Harris.

