

West Houston Muscle

Katy Club Brings Auto Enthusiasts Together for Organized Motoring Mayhem and Camaraderie

Written by Don Armstrong
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Mike Jones and his 1973 Dodge Challenger



West Houston Muscle members showcase a variety of different models



Mike Tenenbown and his 1954 Corvette

Organized hot-rodding gained popularity in the late 1940s and early 1950s, when returning World War II GIs were looking for a little more horsepower in their mostly stock, pre-war coupes and sedans. Popularized in the James Dean movie, *Rebel Without a Cause*, the hot-rodding culture soon became more of the mainstream. Ducktail hairdos, a cool pair of jeans, pointy black shoes, and tight white T-shirts seemed to legitimize the street rod phenomenon.

Today, car customization has become a billion dollar industry, and now there is a Katy car club that encourages area do-it-yourselfers and their families to show off the queen of the garage. West Houston Muscle is the brain-child of Katyite and gear-head Sean Tajipour, a young auto enthusiast who was looking for a car club to join after returning to the area from San Antonio, where he was attending college. Sean and his friend, Adam Jochev each brought a little car club experience with them when they officially kicked things off in January 2009.

An Auto Club with Muscle

Today, West Houston Muscle boasts over 400 registrants, with other car clubs also joining the Saturday drive-in car show at the 59 Diner located at I-10 and Fry Rd. "We have over a hundred cars show up between 4 p.m. and 7 p.m. on a regular basis," says Tajipour. "It's perfect for us, because it leaves the evenings open, since some of the participants have other plans."

During our October visit to the Saturday night ritual, we found a wide variety of hot rods, street machines, mild customs, and even racecars, all of which could be entered in events that would normally charge an admission fee to see them. This one does not. Plus, the car owners we talked to were eager to give us all the details about their car's history and everything they've done to make it unique.

Old Classics and Updated Twists

Among the early arriving attendees was Mike Jones, proud owner of a yellow 1973 Dodge Challenger with a 410 cubic-inch Hemi that produces 500 horsepower. Its symphony of sound is delivered through a set of Magnaflow mufflers. Jones has owned this spic-n-span classic for four years.

Famous GM designer, Harley Earl, known for the tailfin era of the 1950s, helped pen the design of Robert Ziegner's white and green '59 Chevrolet Biscayne. The 50/50 split front bench seat allows for easy access to the living room-sized rear seat area. Robert decided to replace the stock six-cylinder with a 383 "stroker" power plant that produces an estimated 375 to 400 horsepower.

New 2010 Camaros are among the most popular at this Katy event. Models displayed included a base 305 horsepower V-6, along with a couple of ground-pounding Corvette-powered SS versions. There were also a few older models in attendance that had been horsepower-enhanced.

Since there are Camaros there, you know that Mustangs have to be there, too. One that caught our attention was a black 2005 model owned by Mike Kogucz, who has logged over 100,000 original miles on his pony car. Included in his ever-changing makeover is a Kenne Bell Supercharger that adds an additional 100 horsepower to the factory's already beefy 320 horses.

An Afternoon of Cars and Camaraderie

One common denominator in car clubbing is camaraderie. Friends, acquaintances, and folks you've never met before come together to celebrate one common theme: the American automotive scene. Not much has changed since I got involved back in the late 1970s, except there are quite a few younger participants nowadays.

These guys and gals are your friends, neighbors, and, perhaps, folks you may not have seen in a number of years. Such was the case when I ran into an old business associate who I hadn't seen since the mid '90s. Bob Minerich owns a 1999 Nassau Blue, fixed-roof Corvette, one of a limited number produced that year. Minerich has spent countless hours - and money - customizing his beauty, which includes an ostrich and eel interior, just for starters. This 'Vette isn't



Johnnie Jackow's 1968 Camaro drag car



West Houston Muscle meets every Saturday in Katy



Matt and Katrina Katsarelis and their Corvette



The club lets auto enthusiasts share tips on keeping cars in top condition

West Houston Muscle *Fast Facts*

- } Saturday street meet held rain or shine
- } Meets at 59 Diner on I-10 at Fry Rd.
- } No membership or yearly fees
- } All cars are welcome to participate
- } The club supports many Katy charities
- } Family-friendly atmosphere

just eye-candy, though. It burns through a quarter mile in under 12 seconds.

Among the other Corvette owners in attendance was Mike Tenenbown, who caught everyone's attention with his gray 1954 Roadster. Tenenbown tells us, "The original Blue Flame six-cylinder power plant was missing when I found the car, and locating the original - with its matching serial number - would be impossible, so I dropped in a Chevrolet 350 cubic-inch 'crate' motor." Why not? It's much more reliable, fuel-efficient and has tons more horsepower to boot.

After a full day detailing his ride, *Katy Magazine's* publisher, Matt Katsarelis brought out his daily driver, a late-model blue Corvette Roadster.

Even if you don't have a car like any of these, this is one event that the whole family can enjoy. It's free, and West Houston Muscle makes it a local, family-friendly event. KM

DON ARMSTRONG'S knowledge and life-long love affair with motorsports has earned him the reputation of being one of the area's most respected automotive journalists. He's a member of the Texas Auto Writer's Association.



West Houston Muscle is open to all Katy auto enthusiasts, no matter what type of car they own

To learn more about West Houston Muscle, **visit westhoustonmuscle.com**



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