

## Cactus Jalopies custom car show keeps growing and attracting massive crowds

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More than 500 custom cars, trucks and motorcycles are expected for the 12th annual Cactus Jalopies custom car show set for Saturday in Gyro Park in Osoyoos. (Lyonel Doherty file photo)

The Cactus Jalopies Desert Wine Cruise event has become so popular, organizers have had to expand out of Gyro Park.

"We're moving the motorcycle stunt event out of the park and onto 78th Street between Pharmasave and the Canada Post office," said organizer Francine Launier, whose son J.F. founded the event 11 years ago.

"We're expecting more than 500 vehicles for this year's show, which is up almost 200 from last year, so we're going to need the entire park."

The custom car, truck and motorcycle show will take over Gyro Park on Saturday, June 3.

Instead of a one-day event, organizers have turned Cactus Jalopies into a full weekend of fun as dozens will participate in a dinner and poker run with their vehicles on Friday, June 2, said Launier.

The weekend will wrap up with anyone who has entered a vehicle in the show heading to the Area 27 racetrack in Oliver to meet track designer and legendary Canadian race car driver Jacques Villeneuve.

"Anyone who has entered a vehicle in the show is invited to head up to Area 27 on Saturday afternoon," she said. "Mr. Villeneuve will be there as that facility is having its official grand opening the same weekend."

"All of the car owners will be allowed to drive their vehicles one lap around the track and then have a group photo with Jacques Villeneuve and some of the beautiful cars that will be there that day."

More than 100 vehicle owners have already pre-registered for this year's Cactus Jalopies and she's confident there will be more than 500 vehicles on display the day of the event, said Launier.

"We had over 300 last year, but we've had great early response this year and I do think we'll reach that 500 mark," she said. "During our first year 11 years ago, we were hoping to get 100 cars and we ended up with more than 130. We've been growing every year since and this will be the biggest jump yet."

Custom vehicle owners from all across British Columbia will be coming to Osoyoos, but the show has become so popular there are entries from far and wide, she said.

"We have several coming from the Lower Mainland, all kinds from Alberta, some from Manitoba and Saskatchewan and we also have a lot from the U.S., including Spokane, Seattle, many other parts of Washington State and even one guy from California," she said. "Our show has become very popular and we're quite proud of that."

Registration will begin the evening of Thursday, June 1 at Kobau Lanes bowling alley from 7-10 p.m.

Registration will resume Friday morning at 10 a.m. in a booth set up outside the Watermark Beach Resort and continue all day and resume again Saturday morning at 8 a.m. in Gyro Park.

There will be a beer garden open all day as well, she said.

Numerous vehicle owners will participate in wine tours and the poker run on Friday evening and then head to dinner at the Watermark, she said.

The popular motorcycle stunt team from Kelowna will return and this event always draws huge crowds, she said. The stunt drivers will have three shows at 11 a.m., noon and 1 p.m.

Awards for Best in Show will be handed out around 2 p.m. before drivers head to Area 27, she said.

The weekend will wrap up Sunday with many car enthusiasts taking in a full day of drag racing at the Richter Motorsports Park at the Osoyoos Airport property starting Sunday morning.

Cactus Jalopies traditionally attracts a crowd estimated at more than 2,000 people and Launier is confident this year's event will attract the largest crowds ever considering there will be more vehicles than ever before entered.

"We're very excited once again about this year's show," she said. "We hope to see lots of people."