

MG car lovers return to Osoyoos for late-spring ritual

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Colin Fitzgerald, founder of the Vancouver Pre-1956 MG UnClub shows off one of the classic cars at the Watermark Beach Resort. (Keith Lacey photo)

In what has become a late-spring ritual, two dozen owners of one of the most respected and admired sports cars ever built returned to Osoyoos last week for five days of fun that included wine tours, road tours and even lawn bowling.

For the fifth year in a row, members of the Vancouver Pre-1956 MG UnClub made the trip from Vancouver to Osoyoos to spend several days showing off their British sports cars and driving them to various wineries across the region.

Colin Fitzgerald, the founder of the club based out of Vancouver, said this year's "road trip" was the biggest yet with close to 25 MG owners and 44 people in total making the five-day sojourn.

"This is one of the most scenic trips you can make anywhere in the province," said Fitzgerald. "The natural beauty is incredible and it's a great place to visit for a few days."

Members of the club actually stayed in Oliver during their first trip to the South Okanagan six years ago, but they had a tough time finding accommodations and worked out a deal with the Watermark Beach Resort and they have been coming back to that hotel each June for the past five years, said Fitzgerald.

For those who don't know, the old English Morris Garage (MG) is considered one of the most admired old-style roadster sports cars ever built.

All club members own MG models built before 1956, he said.

That date is important as the British manufacturer switched from making MGs with wooden frames to metal and steel and introduced an Austin engine instead of the original motors, he said.

"If you ask any member of our club, they will be unanimous in stating that the MG was one of the finest sports cars ever built prior to 1956," he said. "Things changed drastically after 1956 and the car remains very popular to this day, but it was simply not the same after they changed the design."

He is biased, of course, but Fitzgerald believes the MG sports cars built before 1956 were unmatched in terms of design, style and reputation.

Their stay in Osoyoos included several wine tours in Osoyoos, Oliver and Summerland and extended day trips across the South Okanagan.

Last Thursday, the entire group was invited by the Osoyoos Lawn Bowling Club to spend a few hours learning the rules of the game and playing a match. They were also treated to lunch at the club.

Gerald Gielen, who was a guest member with the car club, approached the lawn bowling club executive and they gladly agreed to have several members show up to give lessons and teach the intricacies of the game.

"We were looking for something to do, so I approached the lawn bowling club and they were more than willing to help us out," he said. "Not only were they gracious enough to invite all the members and their guests, but they're also treating us to a nice lunch. The hospitality we receive every year is a big reason why we keep coming back to Osoyoos."

Fitzgerald said he's already looking forward to returning to Osoyoos next June.

"Our club is all about getting out and touring and enjoying our cars and we just love making the trip to this beautiful part of the province," he said. "The people at the Watermark treat us so well and we really look forward to coming back to Osoyoos every year."

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Osoyoos Times



Beautiful vintage MGs were lined up outside the Watermark Beach Resort last week. (Keith Lacey photo)