

THE TWILIGHT RUN FROM JOONDALUP TO MANDURAH

Two years ago a local west coast hot rod club organised a summer twilight run from Joondalup in the northern suburbs of Perth down to Mandurah, south of Perth where the Murray River joins the ocean.

Other car clubs were invited to join in on the run. The Buick Owners Club of WA has participated for the last two years and this event is now on our events calendar.

The northern cars leave Joondalup at 6 pm (this year Wednesday 15 February) and proceed south down the Mitchell Freeway. They cross over the Swan River and continue on the Kwinana Freeway.

Its a fairly unstructured run and cars gather on the on ramps at various locations awaiting the first car to appear from the north, usually a hot rod.

Alan decided to give our red and black 72 GSX a run and we parked behind a Mustang with a Corvette behind us. Fellow club members Scott and Sherren Barker in their 57 Buick were a bit further down the line. Passing modern cars and trucks heading down the freeway tooted and yelled and gave the thumbs up sign as they spotted American and Australian muscle on the edge of the road.

Sure enough, about 6.40 pm a bright yellow hot rod appeared, leading the pack. We fired up and slotted in amongst the cars. You wonder where all these stunning cars have been hiding.

There was a range of 1950s Ford and Chev pickups, all beautifully restored. Mustangs and Corvettes were well represented as were the rumbling Ford GTs. There were a couple of Dodge Chargers looking like the "General" with their 01 number on the side.

The rods were all shapes, ages and sizes. Some looked as though they were from a cartoon but all looked very well finished with quirky number plates.

The next Buick we spotted was Pete and Bev Nicholson's 1976 LeSabre Landau, recently landed in Australia. No-one else in Western Australia has a 76 (to my knowledge) and it certainly had a distinctive shape. This was its second run and it performed very well. The black paintwork looked great and was a contrast to the white seats and trim. It certainly was much longer than our GSX with its Skylark body.

Just looking at all this stupendous horsepower on the road and the noise of the engines was exhilarating. It makes you realise how ordinary and boring the modern cars are, they virtually all look the same. There must be generations of kids who have never seen a 50s, 60s or 70s car.

Conspicuous by their absence were English and European cars but perhaps they realised that to turn up in a Mayflower or an Anglia or some other misshapen, underpowered car would be embarrassing for them.

By now the cars were pouring into Mandurah and the Buicks as usual, peel off at the foreshore and head for Cicerello's Fish Shop.

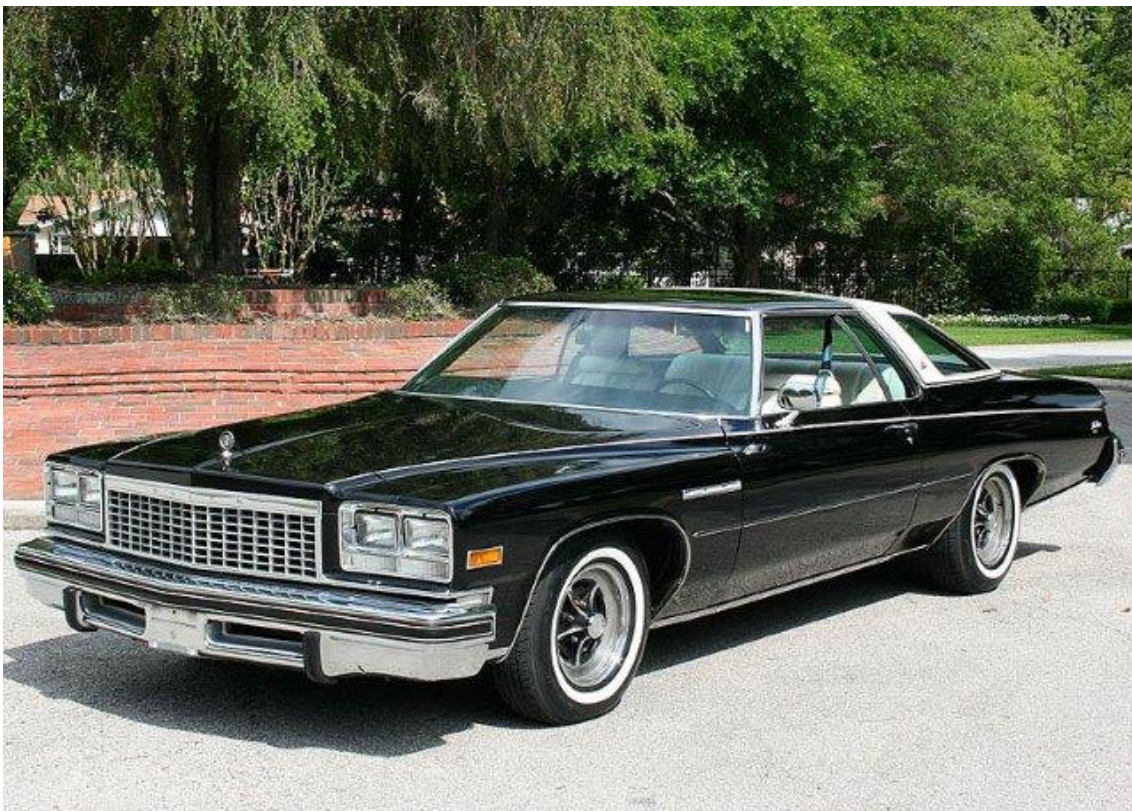
Harold and Gail Hitchcock arrived in their 1950 and Rob and Susan Niksic pulled in with their 72 Boattail.

A circle of chairs was formed on the lawn and we watched a stunning sunset over the water, made more spectacular by the smoke from a bushfire burning further south where a lightning strike had lit up some state forest.

Denis and Gail McGavigan, who live in Mandurah, joined our group, Denis driving their 1956.

About 9.30 pm we broke camp and after fielding questions from tourists about the cars, we headed back to Perth. It was a nice drive back with very few cars on the freeway. All in all, a very pleasant and casual run and certainly great that people have the opportunity to bring their treasures out occasionally. There must have been 200-300 cars on the run and I bet there are even more next year.

L M Haime (WA Buicks)



Pete & Bev Nicholson's stunning 76 LeSabre Landau