



Classic Car Show at Minter Gardens
Sunday July 17, 2011 from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm

Rare Olds Toronado debuts at Chilliwack's Classic Car Show

Call it patriotism or just a love of cars, but when Chilliwack's Trevor Weflen stumbled across a 1967 Oldsmobile Toronado stored in the United States, he just knew it had to come back to Canada.

In 1967, to help celebrate Canada's Centennial and Expo 67, Esso Oil Company commissioned Hollywood's George Barris to promote their summer safety campaign by creating a unique vehicle that would be used as a prize. Barris has spent a life time customizing cars and is well known in Hollywood for his work; some of his most famous creations include the Batmobile, the Munster Koach from the Munsters, the Beverly Hillbillies' jalopy, and he even updated KITT from the Knight Rider series. For Expo 67, he customized four identical Oldsmobile Toronados that were given away by Esso as the summer fair continued.

One of the four was won by a Texas resident and this spring Weflen, poking around on Craig's List came across the car for sale in the States. As it was labeled incorrectly on the ad, he wasn't sure it was the one he was looking for until he saw it in person. It was – and it took his breath away.

"I really did stumble across it, but when I saw it and knew that this was it. I had this really Canadian moment and I told myself that this car belongs in Canada," he says. "It was a moment of clarity and I knew that car was coming home with me."

After a few days of negotiations, Weflen was happily making plans to bring this rare find back to Canada. It is now stored in Chilliwack and will be a part of this year's Classic Car Show held at Minter Gardens on July 17. The Classic Car show is organized each summer by the Fraser Valley British Motor Club at Chilliwack's Minter Gardens and is the highlight for car enthusiasts across the province and Western States.

The Olds Toronado, painted a bronze/copper colour is in great condition but Weflen is working to restore the interior upholstery because, while in great shape, it is not the stock colour. He was also delighted to find a set of original tires and has had them shipped to Chilliwack to be installed on the classic vehicle.

"I am really happy to have the car and the fact that it's in such good condition is a wonderful bonus. It had disappeared after it was taken to Texas and nobody really knows where it's been for much of its history – it hadn't been heard of for years. Now it's back in Canada and I'm happy to share it with people."

It will be unveiled in all its glory at the ninth annual Classic Car show at Minter Gardens. Fraser Valley British Motor Club vice-president Harv McCullough says the Toronado is a much-welcome addition to the show.

“We are really proud that this car is not only in Canada, but in Chilliwack and we want to highlight how unique this vehicle is and how lucky we are to have it available for our show,” says McCullough. “It really is in a class all by itself and for that reason our committee has decided to add a Specialty Feature Novelty car category for this car.”

Event organizer Erin Minter is expecting more than 100 mint-condition, classic cars at this year’s show and she says car lovers are going to be thrilled by the variety and sheer beauty of the line-up.

All vehicles entered into the show are classed into a category depending on the origin and era of the vehicle. There are eight different categories and during the show people can vote on their favourite car. First place winners in each category from the last two years are show cased in the Premier Class category. Participants can also vote for the ‘People’s Choice’ award for the vehicle that they feel is the most outstanding addition to the show. The ‘People’s Choice’ winner is the featured car in next summer’s show. This year’s feature car is a stunning 1957 Chevrolet Nomad.

“We are very excited to see how the show is taking shape and the interest we’ve had from people who want to enter their special vehicle. It’s going to be a wonderful show and I think people will be truly amazed at the variety of vehicles that will be on display this year.”

While the cars are the main attraction, they could not be showcased in a more beautiful setting. Minter Gardens features 12 uniquely themed gardens and the cars are parked throughout the acres and acres of colourful flowers. Interconnecting paths help with the natural flow of the show and visitors will enjoy the natural beauty with the nostalgia and history celebrated by these classic cars.

Live musical entertainment is provided by The Cats N' Jammers and Minter notes the Chilliwack Spinners and Weaver's Guild will be on hand to add to the historic theme. As always, guests can enjoy refreshments at the outdoor barbecue, the elegant Trillium Restaurant, or the Garden Cafe in the Envision Conservatory.

The Classic Car show takes place Sunday, July 17 at Minter Gardens located at 52892 Bunker Rd., Chilliwack and runs from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. For rates regarding admission and directions to Minter Gardens please visit www.mintergardens.com .

Minter Gardens

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