

**2009 FALCON GT CONCOURSE NATIONALS**  
**HOSTED BY THE FALCON GT CLUB of S.A.**

Without trying to sound too biased and after participating in many car shows over the last ten years, the 2009 Falcon GT Concourse Nationals, would have to rate as the best that I have ever experienced.

This event was held over the Easter long weekend from 9<sup>th</sup> April to 12<sup>th</sup> April 2009 and involved various locations including Elder Park, Mallala Racetrack, Birdwood Motor Museum, The Convention Centre and Wrigley Reserve. The programme of events was to include event registration and some early scrutineering for unjudged cars on the Wednesday and Thursday at the Chifley Hotel. Further registration continued at the Chifley Hotel until Friday. Scrutineering and pre judging for judged cars was performed on the Thursday at Tony Gerace Restorations, Mile End and on Friday at Maughn Thiem, on the Port Road. Approximately 60 cars were prejudged at Tony Geraces workshop on the Thursday and approximately 290 cars were prejudged at Maughn Thiem on the Friday. The use of pits and hoists for pre judging would be a first in the history of the GT Nationals and was a resounding success. Our local, interstate and overseas guests remarked on the professionalism and smoothness this part of the proceedings was conducted. Credit must be given to the many people who volunteered their valuable time to ensure that this important and essential part of the Concourse Nationals proceedings would be conducted and completed correctly. Many thanks to, Roger, Sean and Gary for all their hard work and commitment, in managing and maintaining a very high standard of Concourse guidelines and scrutineering.

Friday night was a meet 'n' greet informal gathering at the Grand Chifley and Chifley Hotels on South Terrace. Around 400 people enjoyed some casual food and drinks after a mix up by the hotels management was sorted out. This part of the weekend's entertainment could have started on a better footing; however, valuable lessons were learnt from the unfortunate experience.

Saturday was the Concourse and Show 'n' Shine at Elder Park. Without a doubt, this to many is what the Nationals is all about. After the fiasco of the Torrens Weir malfunction and unsightly mess of the River Torrens, the possibility of rain over Easter and perhaps not enough room to accommodate all of the cars, still lingering in the back of my mind, the day turned out to be the best that I have ever encountered. Not only was the River Torrens full and looking magnificent, but also the grounds and surroundings were unique in their presence. The weather was absolutely fantastic and as the entrants started to drive in and be marshalled towards their position around 6.00am, I sensed that this was going to be one hell of a day. As it turned out it was one hell of a day, one that will remain etched in my memory for a very long time. In no time, Elder Park was full with a magnificent array of GT's, from all over the country and New Zealand. All of us on the Nationals committee put in a lot of time and effort into the planning and layout of Elder Park and all of the other aspects for this event and it certainly paid off. Entrants were impressed with the ease and positioning of their vehicles by the many volunteer marshals that had been organized to do that job. This event had been well advertised by the media and local radio stations and it did not take long before the crowds of car enthusiasts, who enjoyed the free entry, started to pour in. From my perspective, it was an incredible sight. The sight of all those GT's of varying colours, makes and models, with their enthusiastic owners lapping up the atmosphere and with crowds of visitors looking, talking and

taking photographs, of arguably the best Australian and South African muscle cars in the country. I'm sorry if I sound just a little overawed, but that's what the Nationals can do to you. By mid morning everything was in place, including caterers, the band, all of the trade stands and official marquees. The whole place was buzzing with enthusiasm and excitement, what more could one ask for. The judges were going about the inevitable task of trying to sort out the best from the good; such was the standard of the majority of the cars. I decided to have a major "face lift" performed on my car, and this certainly paid off. The enthusiasm and interest shown towards my car by other entrants and general spectators was quite frankly staggering. I must admit, putting the effort and hard work into the presentation and display of my vehicle, strikes a chord with most car enthusiasts at any event that I attend.

At this point in time I would sincerely like to congratulate and thank Tony Gerace and his work colleague and friend, Vinnie at Gerace Restorations, Mile End, for the incredible make over to my car, which has transformed my pride and joy into one of the best Falcon XYGT's in Australia. Well done Tony and Vinnie.

The merchandising tent was doing a bumper trade and I believe actually sold out of many items before days end leaving some enthusiasts disappointed, but that's life. Amongst the famous phase 3's that were displayed on the day and there were many, the stand out phase 3 racecars of Murray Carter and John French created a lot of attention and interest by everyone. Their history and success has been well documented, but to see those cars as they were driven and the condition on the day was beyond belief. It was evident to me that many long hours, knowledge and a lot of dollars had been put into their restoration. From my perspective it was an absolute pleasure to have the opportunity to view them.

As the day drew to a close, I realised that this Concourse was one that would be hard to beat. The bar has certainly been raised again by South Australia and I guess puts out the challenge to future hosts of this great event. The entrants and public had behaved admirably throughout the day and the realisation that it was about time to start packing up soon dawned on me. Time had gone so quickly, but that's what happens when you are having fun. As usual, I was the first to arrive at Elder Park at 5.30am in the dark to begin setting up and would be the last to leave at 7.00pm, when Glen Shipp from his specialist towing company Shipp Bros would place my car carefully onto his tilt tray and take it home to my place. It had been one incredible day.

Many thanks must go to Don and Beryl and all of the volunteers who helped with various chores, in order to make the day such a success that it was. Congratulations and thanks to all that helped. You should feel immensely proud of what you have achieved in these 2009 Nationals.

Saturday night was a super cruise involving Falcon GT's and Aussie Muscle Cars, travelling around some of the main arterial roads and suburbs of Adelaide. I believe the cruise was a success and enjoyed by all who attended. It was a great night with fine and mild conditions, to parade your pride and joy around the streets of Adelaide and would have been an incredible sight for all to witness. Thanks Sean for organising the event.

On Sunday, entrants had the choice of either driving up to the Mallala Racetrack, show and/or participate in the regularity events of the day, which had been organised

by the Sporting Car Club of SA or to enjoy a leisurely cruise, from Adelaide to the Birdwood Motor Museum. I believe that both venues had equal billing. Unfortunately, I was unable to attend either of these events, but was told by many people later that they thoroughly enjoyed themselves. Seeing the GT's cruise around the track at Mallala would have been awesome, particularly the race cars of Murray Carter and John French in their original phase 3's, who by the way are in their 70's and who haven't lost their touch with the "old girls" I was told. Also, it was a pity that they weren't able to give their cars a good workout due to the traffic of slower cars in front. Apparently, the supercharged wild violet XB Falcon created a lot of interest and enjoyment to spectators.

Again, there were volunteers from the Falcon GT Club of SA and other car clubs who gave up their time in order to help with scrutineering and other tasks in order to make the day a great success. Thank you one and all for your efforts and willingness to help.

I was told the trip to the Birdwood Motor Museum was interesting and enjoyed by those who went, albeit, that some interstate entrants became lost and didn't get there. Many thanks to Don and Beryl, who organised the collection of fees at the Torrens Parade Ground, prior to leading the group of cars to the Birdwood Motor Museum. This exercise in fact saved a lot of time when the cars arrived at the Museum.

Sunday night was the presentation dinner at the Convention Centre and what a night this turned out to be. This was the highlight of the Nationals, where everybody had the opportunity to release their tensions, by letting their hair down and thoroughly enjoying themselves. There were around a hundred people gathered already, as my wife Jude and I walked into the Convention Centre foyer. All eyes were on us as I realised that everybody was looking at my wife, who had worn a stunning long backless dress with glistening beads and shoes to match for the occasion. After all, we were encouraged to "dress to impress". Unfortunately, some people preferred to dress "casual", which did dampen the atmosphere somewhat as far as I was concerned. Anyway, everyone was enjoying the ample pre dinner drinks and nibbles, talking and mixing, prior to entering the dining area. We were soon ushered into a spectacular candle lit table settings dining area that took your breath away. The forty plus groups of ten to a table soon filled up, as people settled into their seats and started to enjoy themselves. Due to unforeseen circumstances, John was asked to perform the duties of Emcee at the last moment and for those who were there would agree that he did a great job, well done John. The food was of a very high quality and plentiful, together with a continuous supply of varying drinks to suit any ones palate. Everyone appreciated the punctual supply of food and drinks as the fabulous band and their 60's and 70's era music, entertained us throughout the night. From the outset, the dance floor was packed with people who enjoyed the style and brilliance of the band "Just For Fun". Everybody appreciated that the addresses and presentation of trophies to the Concourse winners and placegetters had to commence as we ate in order to get through them all. The 500 guests greeted the announcing and receiving of trophies in front of the stage with enthusiasm and applause, needless to say that I was one of them. Congratulations to the following Falcon GT Club of S.A. members who received trophies:

**TOP XR GT – UNRESTORED    LEO AND ANNE KHOURI**

**TOP XR GT – RESTORED    GARY WATSON**

**TOP XR GT – MODIFIED    GARY WATSON**

**TOP XW GT – UNRESTORED    DON ROBERTSON**

**RUNNER UP XW GT – CONTEMPORARY    JOE WEIGL**

**RUNNER UP XW GTHO1 – RESTORED    JOHN WALTERS**

**2<sup>nd</sup> RUNNER UP XW GTHO1 – RESTORED    ALLAN INWOOD**

**RUNNER UP XW GTHO2 – UNRESTORED    LEO AND ANNE KHOURI**

**TOP XW GTHO2 – RESTORED    LEO AND ANNE KHOURI**

**RUNNER UP XY GT – UNRESTORED    MICHAEL STAVRIDES**

**TOP XY GT – RESTORED    LEO AND ANNE KHOURI**

**TOP XY GT – MODIFIED    RON TEBBY**

**TOP XY GTHO – UNRESTORED    SIMON GARANTINI**

**TOP XY GTHO – RESTORED    JOE BARCA**

**2<sup>nd</sup> RUNNER UP XA GT SEDAN – RESTORED    BRIAN LUCKRAFT**

**TOP XA GT RPO83 – UNRESTORED    LEO AND ANNE KHOURI**

**TOP XB GT SEDAN – RESTORED    JIM GIOVINAZZO**

**TOP XB GT COUPE – RESTORED    KARL BROWN**

**TOP SOUTH AFRICAN FAIRMONT GT    ROSS ROMEO**

**BEST CLASSIC – UNRESTORED    LEO AND ANNE KHOURI**

**BEST CLASSIC – RESTORED    JOE BARCA**

**BEST ENGINE BAY OVERALL    LEO AND ANNE KHOURI**

**BEST UNDER CARRIAGE OVERALL    LEO AND ANNE KHOURI**

**ENTRANTS CHOICE    JOE BARCA**

**GRAND TOURER CLASSIC ERA TROPHY    LEO AND ANNE KHOURI**

My elation in receiving Top XY GT – Modified was none the less euphoric. All the hard work had paid off and I am sure all of the other recipients of awards felt the same way as I did. Congratulations to all of the other award recipients and let's not forget all of the other entrants who were not quite successful, for without their participation and interest, the Nationals would not have been as spectacular as it was.

There was an early hiccup with the power point presentation of the winners and placegetters cars on the big screen, but this was soon sorted out and looked fantastic for all to see and enjoy.

Without a doubt, a special mention of congratulations must go to Leo and Anne Khouri for the incredible and outstanding display of their cars. I was there to witness all of the hard work and detailing that went into the cars at Tony's workshop. Well done Leo and Anne.

I was asked to go on stage and act as a spotter for the auction, which was very successful, with the monies raised contributing significantly to the overall amount, which will benefit our preferred charities.

Jude and I had a fantastic time as we danced and chattered with many of the guests from all over Australia. Needless to say, I had the privilege of sitting with Murray Carter and John French and their wives, which was the catalyst for much conversation about the Bathurst days of the 70's and their impressions when they realised that I was a one owner of the famous "shaker". I did not hesitate to ask them to sign the back of my entrant's shirt, which they unreservedly did. This I will always cherish. The night was soon to come to it's conclusion and as everyone was being asked to leave you could feel and hear the reluctance by people who still wanted to party on. It was a fantastic night and very rewarding. The feed back later, was one of complete enjoyment, from the guests who had just experienced one of the best Falcon GT Nationals ever.

With the weather still being fabulous, Monday was a farewell brunch, which was held at the Wrigley Reserve, Glenelg. Here we drove our GT's onto the reserve and enjoyed a lovely brunch of eggs, bacon and tomatoes on some bread, which went down very well with a hot tea or coffee. It was time to reminisce on the past few days, asking our guests how they enjoyed themselves, what they thought of the whole event and to wish them all a safe and incident free journey back home. Around 50 cars turned up, with many spectators taking advantage of viewing our prized machines while they were parked on the reserve. The general consensus that I received from the many hundreds of people that I had spoken to, over the past four days, was that the total event was absolutely awesome, of the highest standard and the best that they had ever attended. Notwithstanding some minor glitches, the event generally exceeded most people's expectations.

Being a member of the Nationals Committee and knowing how much time, effort, organization and commitment is required, in order to produce a successful event, I would personally like to thank and congratulate Hugh and Julie, Roger and Judy, Sean, Don and Beryl and Gary who together with other volunteers contributed to this events great success. Also, a big thank you to Ben, our web master, who did a fantastic job with the web pages presentation, which provided everybody anything one would want to know, regarding the 2009 Nationals. Well done, Ben.

A special mention of thanks to all of our sponsors and in particular, Gerace Restorations and Gun Capital Management, for there major contribution and cooperation towards the success of the 2009 Nationals and to the Falcon GT Club of SA for not only hosting the Nationals, but also sponsoring the trophies that were presented.

It was a lot of hard work, which started about 4 years ago when the Falcon GT Club of SA knew that it would be hosting the 13<sup>th</sup> Falcon GT Nationals in 2009. After the Nationals committee was formed, about 3 years ago and a clearer understanding of how the weekend was to be planned, everybody set about their task/s with enthusiasm and diligence. The committee would meet once a month, to progressively put into place all of the aspects that would be required to produce a successful and very high standard event. Without the help and cooperation of many people, the 2009 Falcon GT Concourse Nationals would not have been the great success that it was.

Authorised and written by  
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