



San Diego Region

Predictor



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PACKARDS AT STONERIDGE COUNTY CLUB

by Steve Ross

Mother Nature finally got to the Packards. For the first time since I have been involved with our Christmas gala, NO Packards were in attendance. The rain was just too much for the grand old ladies of the road. Many of us waited until the very last minute to make the commitment. Now this is not to say that we could not have made it, no problem, but who wants to get mud and water into those old crevices and seams where rust likes to live and grow, eating away at our beautiful treasures. StoneRidge provided a warm Christmas atmosphere for us to enjoy our afternoon of cheer. The food was excellent and the drinks were plentiful for those choosing to partake. After socializing and dining, President Todd surprised everyone with a 2010 calendar featuring the member's cars. Several of our members had their Packard on the front cover. Each attendee at the party received their own personal copy of the calendar. These calendars will be available to our membership and extra copies are being printed for sale. For all the details contact Todd.

The club presented Todd Schonenberg with a beautiful Packard Plaque in recognition of his service as president for the past two years. Thank you, Todd. Karl Ramsing presented the McNeil's an award for hosting the club at their home in November of 2009.

Our incoming President, Mark Burnside, gave us a quick run down of next years events and believe me, there are some new and exciting events in the works, so watch the Predictor for all the information. Your board is definitely thinking "outside the box" for the coming year.

We then proceeded into our traditional swap/steal gift exchange. It was a blast as usual with many of the treasures moving from table to table. I am sure some of the "gifts" will be seen again next year! A beautiful set of coffee mugs comes to mind. Since no one had to rush home before it got dark, the party lasted a bit longer than usual. We had a truly warm, pleasant, fun Christmas party and if you were not there, well you just missed out on a really good deal. We will be seeing you at our events in 2010 and for sure at the 2010 Christmas party---RIGHT!

CALENDAR

- Jan 17: Installation Brunch, Location TBA
- Jan 29-31: Packards International Membership Meet, Doubletree Hotel, Orange, CA
- Feb: No Tour Planned
- Mar 13: San Diego Botanical Gardens, Encinitas
- Apr 24: Member Garage Tour and Progressive Brunch
- May 14: Packard Night at Cruisin' Grand, Escondido
- May 15: Road Rally ending at Deer Springs, Escondido
- June 19: BBQ at Dale and Debbi Costanzo's Home, San Marcos
- July 10: Packard Mini-Concours
- Aug 14: Olympic Training Center, Chula Vista
- Sep 17-24: P.I. National Driving Tour to Lone Pine, CA
- Sep 25 or 26: Coronado Speed Festival
- Oct 23-24: Overnight Driving Tour and Road Rally, Destination TBA
- Nov 13: Visit to California Veterans Home, Chula Vista
- Dec 4: Holiday Party

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Website:
packardsandiego.org
Find P.I. San Diego information,
links to P.I. Chapters & P.I. National
Events

FOR SALE – CARS AND PARTS



'41 Packard Convertible Sedan,
\$68,500, 801-322-5509
utahclassiccars.com

Losing garage space, must sell:
'55 Super Clipper Constellation
'55 Super Clipper Constellation
'56 Clipper Deluxe (not complete)
'57 "57L-P8 Clipper

Donald Smith, 619-281-4733
3510 33rd St., San Diego, CA 92104

For P.I. – San Diego Members:

Do you have a collector car or parts for sale? To place an ad in our newsletter, email Gary Wysong at gwysong@cox.net or call 619-267-8879.

If you have an email address at home or work, but get your newsletter by regular mail, email Gary Wysong to be placed on our email list.

For Sale:
4 fenders for a senior '36, Right front not in good condition, but other 3 easily prepped for paint/install.
Call Rick Hagen
619-401-3027
R_Hagen@cox.net

'39 Packard 1708 Limousine V-12, \$59,500
401-521-5333 Dick Shappy Classic Cars

'36 Packard Business Coupe, \$42,500,
Yellow, 808-782-8282 oldride.com

Members: Your Board needs your Recommended Services/Parts persons or firms that you have had favorable dealings with during restoration and preservation of your Packards. Please send person/firm (name/address/phone number) to Mark Burnside at markburnside@cox.net where he will post this on our updated website. We are also accumulating a list to publish for your use – Karl Ramsing

'41 Packard 110 Woody Deluxe,
\$169,500, Maroon
314-524-6000 hymenltd.com

'55 Packard Caribbean
Convertible, \$89,900,
314-291-7000
oldride.com

'37 Packard 120 Coupe, \$33,998
815-385-3644 Volo Auto Museum

'41 Packard Clipper Military Staff Car, \$14,998,
volocars.com Illinois, 815-385-3644

'55 Packard 400, Turquoise/White, \$26,900
314-291-7000 oldride.com

San Diego Automotive Museum needs Volunteers
“We need dedicated men and women to assist us as docents, restoration workers, library assistants and automotive detailers”.
Join a fun team of people who enjoy the culture of automobiles and the culture of Balboa Park. No experience necessary! We will train!
If you have any questions, call 619-398-0307 x2239.

'37 Packard 120 CD, 58,000 miles, blue, dual side mount spares, 2,000 miles on engine rebuild, high compression head, trunk rack, \$35,000
Dave Louzek 858-682-8585 dml48@aol.com

'37 Packard 115C, \$31,990
800-409-0199 specialtysales.com

'53 Packard Cavalier, \$11,500, good driver, driven regularly on tours, new www tires, Bob Williams, pckrdbob@internet49.com,
916-483-2003, Nor Cal Region

See McLellan's Automotive History for Packard Sales Literature, Dealer Literature, Magazines, Out-of-Print Books, Manuals & Memorabilia.
713-772-3285 or mclellansautomotive.com

Check these two websites for Packard Information:
Packardinfo.com yesterdays-cars.com/Packard_clubs.htm

Buy Packard parts at the packardsandiego.org website

Check out the Hemmings magazine and hemmings.com for features about Packards in the December issue

Have you done any work on your Packard?
Send Gary Wysong a note about any improvements you have made.



Todd Schonenberg & Karl Ramsing



Todd & Debbie Schonenberg



Syd Kirkland & Mark Burnside



Kathleen Paul Santy



Peggy & Karl Ramsing



Carol & Steve Ross



Karen & Richard Schauer Brian Wagner



Larry & Arvilla Johnson



Brian Wagner & Karl Ramsing



Connie & Ralph McNeil



Phil Pizzuto & Brian Wagner



Scott Napora

PACKARD, MERCEDES

And the

1915 INDY 500

by Steve Ross

This is a documented story but not widely known unless you are a member of one of the Packard Automobile Cubs and take the time to read the entire publications. A brief back ground. In the 1913 thru 1917 time frame a man named Ralph DePalma (an Italian/American) drove Mercedes race cars in Europe as well as the states. He was attempting to set land speed records, participated in racing as well as the Indy 500 races.

In preparation for the 1915 Indy 500 the Mercedes was not performing well. The problem came to the attention of an engineer named Jessie Vincent who was at that time the Chief Engineer for Packard Motor Company. The Mercedes was taken to the Packard factory in Detroit where Vincent designed a new carburetor for the car and re-skinned the body to make it more aerodynamic. Vincent later designed aircraft for Packard during WWI and became an Army pilot. He rose to the rank of **Colonel in the Army Air Corp Reserves. DePalma claimed that the new carburetor increased his speed five seconds to the lap.** DePalma won the Indy 500 in 1915 driving the Packard modified Mercedes with an average speed of 89.84 MPH. He had a qualifying speed of 98.58. He finished the 200 laps and led for 132 laps. He was almost 5 minutes ahead of the second place finisher. Mr. DePalma drove Mercedes in several Indy 500 races as well as numerous other races in the US. He led for more laps than any other Indy driver in history until Al Unser broke the record in 1987. DePalma driving a V-12 Packard set the land speed record at 149.87 in 1919. DePalma assisted in the design of that Packard. It is evident that Mercedes, Packard and DePalma had close ties in racing until WWI. I am not sure but it appears that Mercedes was not a sponsor or a supporter of DePalma cars. I think they were purchased by individuals and raced here and in Europe. The Indy 500 Mercedes was owned by a Mr. E. C. Patterson. DePalma drove Mercedes for several years and was very successful. Mercedes was chosen not only for its speed but for its reliability. "Engineered like no other"

The following are courtesy of the Packard International News Counselor fall 2009 issue.

Chicago News, May 16 1915: For the last three weeks DePalma has had been overhauling his car in the experimental shops of the Packard Company. He has had the assistance of Vincent and expert mechanics in getting the Mercedes in shape for the grueling grind of May 20, and in addition to constructing a new body for his machine to reduce wind resistance, Ralph has installed a special Packard carburetor for one of Mercedes' make that was on the chassis when the Italian brought the Teuton speed creation from Europe last summer

Detroit Free Press: Although the car which De Palma drove to victory bears a German name, it is generally understood that it really was built in America. It is known that it was almost entirely rebuilt in the Packard shops. The new champion arrived in Detroit Wednesday morning with his Mercedes-Packard as it is called by his friends and others, and at once sent out to the Packard plant, where the car is to be repaired.

The head line in the Chicago Tribune stated 'HOW THE HYPHENATED AMERICAN BEAT THE ALLIES AT INDIANAPOLIS'

It should be noted here that Packard replaced the carburetor and modified the body but it doesn't appear that Packard did any modifications to the robust, reliable engine of the Mercedes. In 1915 Germany and Europe had begun WWI so the Germans were not popular with the Americans. This accounts for some of the overstating of Packard's role in the Mercedes success on the American racing circuit (my opinion). In the 1914 and 1915 Indy 500 the Peugeot was the Mercedes strongest competitor coming in second in the 1915 Indy raced.

In the 1912 his Mercedes blew a piston with two laps remaining after leading the race for 196 of the 200 laps. He and his riding mechanic pushed the car across the finish line to twelfth place. This car is on display at the Indy 500 museum. Mr. DePalma competed in 2,889 races and won 2,557!! There are many more stories about the Mercedes and Packard racing ventures that may appear in future issues of this bulletin. Quite a record and many victories were in the Mercedes.

In the photos below note the enclosed body of the Mercedes and compare it to the Packard that set a land speed record in 1919. The Packard has enclosed wheels whereas the Mercedes has wire wheels.



1919 Packard Twin Six, 12. DePalma at the wheel. Set land speed record



1915 Mercedes, DePalma at the wheel with his driving mechanic



Photo of the 1919 Packard land speed record breaker taken in 2006 at Amelia Island. The car was taken to South America and Argentina where it raced up until the fifties and was saved by an American collector. Note the wheel covers have been removed going back to the wire Wheels