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LS FEST BEATS THE REST

HOLLEY PUT ON ONE HECK OF A SHOW THAT WILL MAKE LS ENTHUSIASTS THINK TWICE ABOUT MISSING NEXT YEAR

BY SCOTT PARKER
PHOTOGRAPHY BY THE AUTHOR AND JUSTIN CESLER

Emboldened by its new ownership and spearheaded by forward-thinking individuals, the crew at Holley beat every other major organization and company to the punch in putting on an LS-only event last September 10-12 in Bowling Green, Kentucky. Maybe it was sheer guts, given the economy, or maybe it was faith, but they did it and did it well. As the name implies, the Holley LS Fest was hell-bent on being the most fun automotive event ever. It was as if a bunch of smart, creative people sat in a room for days on end and just tried to top each other with new ideas for how to make the event better. Or perhaps they had simply been to so many shows over the years and had been taking mental notes until they had a fully hatched mega-show. Whichever the case, it was apparent that the fun spirit of the staff became infectious to the showgoers at Beach Bend Raceway who seemed less concerned with looking cool and winning prize money than helping each other out, making some new friends and having a good time. Take a look for yourself, and tell me this isn’t an event worth attending.
Luke Hawkins was one of many who took advantage of the autocross course being open for business on Friday, the first day of the LS Fest, despite the rain. His C5 ZO6 sported color-matched C6 ZO6 front and rear brakes, which later helped him take runner-up in the Speed Stop (aka 0-60C-0) in the ABS Street Tire category. Unfortunately, Brian Finch's homebuilt LS3-powered '71 Camaro was also packing the same braking power plus a whole lot of chassis upgrades. Finch won the Autocross Street Tire trophy with a 1:03.024 on BF-G KDW HIs. The Comp Tire class was won by Wiseco's own Brian Nutter in his C5 with a 1:02.286, keep reading for more on Nutter.

As you'd expect, Holley pulled out its full display of hot new LS parts, including a new modular-designed Tunnel Ram intake manifold that will accommodate a number of different throttle body (and carb) configurations. Pair this with the new big-block-style valve covers and a set of Hooker headers, and it is easy to separate your LS from that same tired look, to say nothing of performance. Also on display was some of Holley's LS project cars, and its EFI systems.

There were several fifth-gens tearing up the autocross course, including one that was intent on drifting as much of it as possible. The course had a very unique layout, which made it fun to drive and watch.

A local LS-powered Nissan 240SX put on a drifting display on the autocross course during an intermission. Otherwise, the autocross ran pretty much non-stop throughout the weekend. Our hat goes off to the many competitors that burned their tires and brake pads off, lap after lap.
Mike Copeland of GM brought his Colorado, which sports a Thomson Automotive-built LSX stroker. On motor the truck is a low 10-second ride, but with a healthy shot of nitrous Mike was hoping to hit low 9s.

This Buick Regal Limited was one of many cool swaps at the show, replacing its turbo V-6 with a turbo LSI using the same turbo orientation. Speaking of swaps, it took just under 32 minutes for Justin Dermody and the Team Hot Rod Barn crew from Williamsburg, Iowa, to swap out the motor in their Olds convertible and win the Car Craft Engine Swap Challenge.

There were many stunning LS-powered cars at the Mothers/LSTech.com Show-N-Shine including Tyler Simmons '05 GTO, which won for “Under Construction.” Don and Sandy Davidson's '07 C6 easily took best paint, as this custom metallic yellow mix was flashy and flawless. Trust me, pictures don't do it justice.

The car show also had plenty of engine swaps such as 'Jarod Lucas' '87 Monte Carlo, which even had a fourth-gen interior as well as the features listed on the placard.
The vendors were aplenty from sponsor Scoggin-Dickey Parts Center to Thomson Automotive, ERL Performance, BMR, School of Automotive Machinists, Wiseco, Comp Cams, SPEC, and Hendrix Engineering to name a few.

Scott Hamlin’s '94 Geo Tracker was one of the biggest "must-sees" with its flat-black paint, Grand Sport stripes and rollcage. Of course there was also a '59 Caddy and a '64 Kerman Shia that weren't too shabby either.

Bervil Hillis got points for driving directly to the track from a construction job in His '94 Chevy 1500 work truck, which had a '99 Corvette motor and homebuilt front-mounted turbo kit. The announcer took to calling it the "world's fastest work truck."

Among many fierce competitors in the Index class, Dennis Pearson prevailed with an 11.17 at 121 mph.
Charles Polly proved he was king coming off the tree with an 0.016-second reaction time, taking the win in Bracket with an 11.30 at 109.

Driving the SAM '98 Camaro, David Saunders was the 10-second winner in ERL Performance True Street with a 10.33 average. The ERL Superdeck 11500-cid all-motor combo ran well all weekend.

The folks at Holley showed everyone how it's done in their '67 Chevy "shop truck" during the Baer/Popular Hot Rodding Speed Stop, which became one of the most popular and fun-to-watch events. The cleverly disguised LS3 easily got up to speed, eased on the disc brakes around the first cone, and came to a halt in the "box" just past the second timing light. The winners were decided by who made it between the two timing lights the fastest without crashing through the cones at the end of the "box."

Erik Cederberg of Torq in Miramar, Florida, was one of those previously mentioned that literally ran the tires and brake pads off his 2010 Camaro SS. Check out the sparks coming off that rotor. Erik was a lot of fun to watch on the autocross and Speed Stop, and seemed to have a blast doing it.

Allan Miller of BMR Fabrication was easily one of gutsiest at the Speed Stop, and it paid off by winning the ABS Comp Tire class with a time of 7.56 seconds.

Brian Nutter of Wiseco took second place with an 8.86 in addition to dominating the autocross, making some respectable dragstrip passes in the SPEC Corvette Shootout, and in the process taking second overall in the Grand Champion standings (7 points behind Mark Steilow's '69 Camaro).
Mark Carlyle's Atomic Orange Z06 was not to be taken lightly, though his combo wound up placing him in Unlimited, which ultimately merged with Outlaw Drag Radial. Mark's turbo LSX combo has quietly been rivaling Keith Berry's C5 as the fastest IRS Vette out there, and had put a large gap between himself and the nearest C6 ZO6 when he clicked off an 8.55 during qualifying. In a 7-second class that wasn't going to cut it, but in any other circle that's fast.

Matt Lawrence and the Mayhem Motorsports crew were the easy favorites in the Corvette Shootout with their low 9-second nitrous C6. A 9.30 at 145 mph made him the #1 qualifier. Unfortunately an injector O-ring broke loose at the starting line, which got him a DQ. The crew at Beech Bend was quick to get it cleaned up and re-prep the track. In fact, all weekend they did a tremendous job (despite the rain Friday and Saturday).

Brian Tooley, known for his work with Total Engine Airflow, piloted his infamous white C5 to a second place finish running 11.29 at 100 mph (far from his best on the day).

Those of you who caught the November issue should be very familiar with Rodney Massengale's ProCharged C6 ZO6. He lowered his best e.t. by a tenth on the sticky Beech Bend track, but a 10.31 at 109 is all he needed to win in the finals of the SPEC Corvette Shootout. The RPM Transmissions owner says this may be one of the last outings with the stock LS7, as he has a built 427 and larger blower on standby.
Keith Berry and his nitrous C5 Z06 were on fire, running an 8.55 at 161 mph in qualifying for Wiseco True 10.5/275 Radial. Then he clicked off an 8.47 at 162.8 in the finals against James Cordell's Trans Am, which ran 9.86 at 139, for the win.

There were several very fast nitrous cars including Brian Black's Formula, which had to bow out due to a lifter issue, and [Caneyville, KY local] Adam Preston's '83 Camaro that was running 8.30s all weekend. Unfortunately, competition was stiff in GMHTP's unlimited nitrous class.

One of the biggest stories of the weekend was Mike Kostik's V6SE that ran a 7.91 at 172 mph to set the stock suspension LSx record. So far, only Uncle Robin has ran faster using a nitrous LSx combo ... but guess who Mike had to face in the finals of the GMHTP Shut Your Face Race?

Though both had issues off the line, Uncle Robin's Nova ran an 8.31 to Kostick's 8.65, and it was all over. Robin Lawrence can officially tell any and all nitrous challengers: "Shut your face!"
School of Automotive Machinists All Motor was a one-man show, and guess who? Judson Massengill in the SAM Hugger Orange SS, which ran an 8.96 at 152 during qualifying, is still the fastest N/A car out there. Though we hear there are a few that want to challenge.

LPE's LS9 2010 Camaro, piloted by Jon Ebert, won the fifth-gen/G8 class and was #1 qualifier with a 9.70 at 148 mph. A double-stacked intercooler, smaller pulleys, and a bulletproof drivetrain are a few of the key reasons this manually shifted beast leaves harder than pretty much any other fifth-gen out there.

LMR/Brooks Racing still have the fastest; 2010, and they were certain to defend the crown. The Fi-R ProCharged LSX combo, though, seemed to have a number of issues—mainly with overpowering the drivetrain. Ultimately what cost them the win was a clamp on one of the charge tubes, which blew off during the burnout. Though it might have normally cost them a DQ, the Lingenfelter crew was happy to give them a minute to tighten the clamp down before making the final run. During the second attempt at a burnout, the clamp blew-off again and Steven Fereday was forced to coast across the line for the runner-up prize.

The LMR crew had three very fast black cars at the dragstrip, but none faster than its flat-black twin-turbo Firebird. Unfortunately their schedule of local eighth-mile and slick tire racing hasn't enabled enough testing for them to really harness the LME LSX combo yet on drag radials. However, they had the fastest mph during qualifying for the Comp Cams Outlaw Drag Radial class (192). Rumor has it they are making over 40 psi of boost! Pilot Steven Fereday took runner-up with a 7.93, which made for an exciting final.

Mark Koehler, part of the Ohio Boys Racing crew, took his flawless Firebird to a seamless 7.51 at 189 for the Drag Radial win. Mark's single-turbo ERL Performance combo faired very well, and was extremely consistent. Mark had some issues with the starter bolts backing out that nearly DQed him, but LMR was happy to let him back in and race for the trophy. This was the story of the whole event, guys helping each other out—just trying to have a good time and burn a little rubber. Don't you wish the rest of the world was this simple?
SHUT YOUR FACE
RACE CHAMPION

“UNCLE” ROBIN LAWRENCE

- GMPP 440-CID LSX
- GMPP LSX OR PROTOTYPE CYLINDER HEADS
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