



World's Best Motorcycle Show?

By Geoff Stevenson

Seventy-five bucks (U.S.) seemed an awful lot of money for a motorbike show. Could it really be worth that much? If we were there for most of a day, how expensive would the food be?

Ernie Lalonde and I pondered those questions, among others, as we planned a couple of weeks riding the red dirt of Arizona's backwoods (to be covered in a future issue of the Beemer Reader) and figured to drop in to the show on the way home.

All the clichés seemed appropriate:

It's only money – and you only live once.

So we went online and booked two tickets to The Quail Gathering, scheduled for mid-May at the Quail Lodge and Golf Club in Carmel, CA., one of America's most prestigious zip codes.

Now, having attended the 2015 gathering, we can report that it was worth every penny (even if each one cost close to 1.3 cents Canadian). Better still, the food was free (more on this later).

First, we had to find the Quail Lodge. We had no operating GPS



Even the parking lot outside the show had some pretty fancy wheels.

(Ernie can explain!). We had no detailed maps of the area. However, Bing Maps in my tablet provided the requisite information, and I dutifully copied it down, turn by turn.

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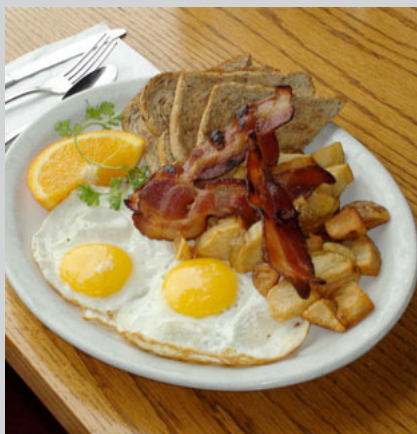
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Next Breakfast/Brunch

Saturday, July 4



WHERE:

Salt Spring Inn
132 Lower Ganges Road
Salt Spring Island

**MEETING PLACE
WHEN & WHERE:**

8:10 am Swartz Bay
for 8:30 Ferry

8:25 am Crofton
for 8:45 Ferry



New ticket technology tests old-timers

The directions guided us through the hills west of Highway 101 and Pebble Beach and the Quail Lodge turned out to be exactly where Mr. Bing had promised.

We got there around 8 a.m. This allowed us to park in the infield. Ernie's trusty but dusty F150 with two dirty bikes in the box looked a little out of place as we drove up beside an immaculate silver Porsche Carrera S.

Event tickets as we old-timers used to know them seem to have gone the way of carburetors and contact breaker points. So we arrived with two bar codes that I'd printed at home – and, just in case, proof that I had paid the Visa bill with the tickets on it, as well as the ticket e-mail safely stored on my tablet.

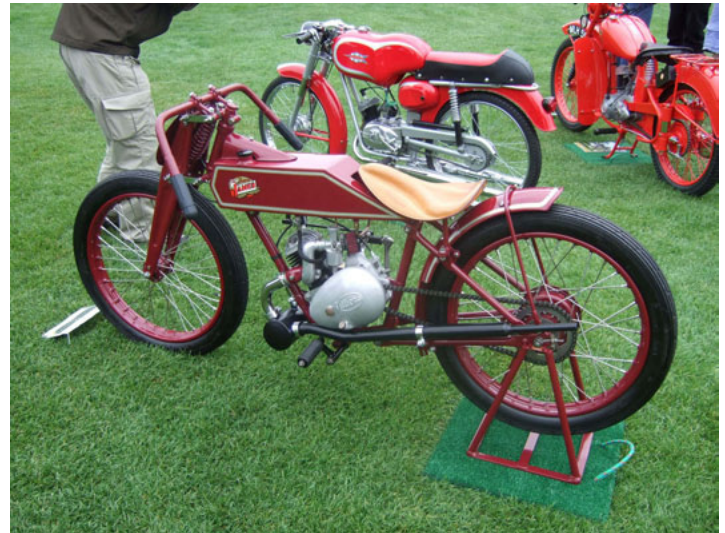
This ticket business didn't start well. We lined up to get our armbands and the entry tent and the woman

on duty zapped the tickets of a young couple and their small daughter ahead of us. "Ineligible ticket" flashed up the screen.

"Try mine," I suggested. She did – with the same result.

I was digging now for the Visa bill. But a second ticket-checker tried his zapper and it accepted all five tickets. The young couple were entrants and were eligible to go onto the infield, but we had to wait until 10:00 for general admission.

So we strapped on our armbands and went into Edgar's Restaurant at the Quail for a coffee and some conversation with Mark the bartender. It was (unsurprisingly) excellent coffee; I was prepared to pay five bucks (or more) a cup, but was relieved when the bill called for a mere \$3.50 each (for a bottomless cup, too).



This James custom looked nothing like the smoky two-strokes James I recall from the 1960s.

It was clear the Quail was a far cry from the Motel 6 units we'd been camping in for the previous couple of weeks. The website suggested rooms started at \$364, but Bookings.com was prepared to sell me one for only \$195. (We weren't interested in staying; after the show, we headed for a Motel 6 not far up the road in Watsonville, just past Castroville, the self-styled artichoke capital of the world. Deep-fried artichokes, anyone?)

I have no words to describe the Quail Gathering.

I've seen a few fancy bikes over the years (and dedicated readers will recall that Ernie and I took in the 650-odd bikes on display at the Barber Museum in Birmingham, Ala., a while back). People who know a lot more about old bikes than me reckon The Quail Gathering might be the best show



A 1908 unrestored Indian board racer was one of our favourites.



More than 200 motorcycles on display



No, this Vincent wouldn't do 150 mph back in the day. But this huge speedo probably sold more than a few bikes.

in the world – and I reckon they might be right.

There were more than 200 bikes on display. There was the prototype (English) Brough Superior SS-100, one of the great collector bikes, last seen in public about 30 years ago.

There were BMWs, of course. A 750 c.c. German WWII sidecar unit towed two

trailers for such necessities as machine guns and ammunition. We reckoned acceleration might be a little limited.

There were a couple of K bikes converted from the original Bosch fuel injection to carburetors – for easier tuning, I assumed.

There were a number of elegant Slash 2s. I bought a new R60 in New Zealand in 1966, so I had a special connection to these beauties.

This was America, so there were naturally a few choppers. I'm not sure how a chopper with a 300 section rear tire and a seriously-raked-out front end actually corners, but this one sure looked pretty.

There were Vincents and Francis-Barnetts, BSAs and Hondas,



There were several restored Slash 2s. They were uniformly gorgeous.



Ernie chose the pulled pork for lunch. The food was excellent.

Ducatis and Harleys, Indians and Yamahas and...

There was food, too, as we noted earlier. Not only was it free, but it was excellent. I chose the barbecued chicken and Ernie opted

for the pulled pork. Amid linen tablecloths and napkins, we sat under a colorful parasol on manicured grass as green as anything seen at the Masters.

Lunch was popular and we ended sharing a table with a guy who'd recently moved to Carmel from



“You feel nothing but inspired”

Illinois. He was indignant over the cost of local real estate (four times that of Illinois, he told us).

We made some polite conversation – and then listened attentively as he started on California politics. I guessed he might vote for the Tea Party. If not, he was clearly a died-in –the-wool Republican and appalled by his fellow Californians, who, he reckoned, expected the state to “do everything for them.”

He owns a new Victory and says he regularly rides about 1,100km in a day to Portland, Ore., to visit his daughter, so we forgave him.

Gene Brown won Best in Show for his 1932 Vincent HRD Python Sport. You can find other winners on the Cycle World website.



A BSA Rocket Gold Star circa 1960 attracted many admirers.

Veteran journalist John L. Stein, a serious collector in his own right, covered the show for Cycle World.

“After forty-whatever-it-is years

of motorcycling,” he wrote, “sometimes I just figure I’ve seen it all. And then I go to the Quail Motorcycle Gathering. Just completing its sixth year at the Quail Lodge in Carmel, California, this wide-encompassing show continues to bend my mind.

“Sure, there is the expected array of beautifully-restored production classics like a Honda CBX, Triumph TR6 and Moto-Guzzi V7 Sport, along with impeccable blue chips, like Vincent and HRD. And a barbecue lunch deserving of a long ride to Monterey County in its own right.

“...it’s like tunneling into Alice’s Wonderland for motorcyclists. And when you walk out again after the awards ceremony, you’ll feel nothing but inspired.”



This Ariel Square Four (Squariel) with sidecar was elegantly turned out.

I couldn’t have said it better.



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Please email Christopher Jones

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Join BMWRVI on Facebook

With the goal of better, faster and flexible communication, BMWRVI has launched a members-only Facebook Group in the new year. The URL will be: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/bmwrvi/>

Here are a few points to consider

- Posts will only visible to group members, namely, members of BMWRVI.
- BMWRVI will require members to be approved or added by an administrator before they can access the group. As the membership list evolves, access to the group will be adjusted.
- The BMWRVI Facebook page will not be used for commercial purposes.
- Members receive notifications by default when any member posts in the group. Group members

can participate in chats, upload photos to shared albums, collaborate on group documents and invite members who are friends to group events.

Members who are familiar with Facebook will need only to request to join the page by entering the URL in the search box and then click <Join Group> in the top right-hand corner. Approval will occur in a day or two.

If you do not have a Facebook account you can create one. For step-by-step instructions go to

- <https://www.facebook.com/help/>
- There are numerous websites that provide advice on security when setting up and using a Facebook account. Do a web search using “Facebook security.”

Club 2015 Event Schedule

Date	Event	Location
Saturday, July 4	Monthly Gathering	Saltspring Island
Friday - Sunday, July 10 - 12	Rocky Bow Lunatic Fringe Rally	Cochrane, Alberta
Sunday, July 19	Ride to Brunch	BW Prestige Oceanfront, Sooke
Thursday - Sunday, July 23 - 26	BMWMOA National Rally	Billings, Montana
Thursday - Sunday, July 30 - Aug 2	Cascade County Rendezvous	Republic Washington
Sunday, August 2	Monthly Gathering	Oak & Carriage, Duncan
Thursday - Sunday, August 6 - 9	42nd Stanley Stomp Rally	Grandjean, Idaho
Thursday - Sunday, August 13 - 16	Hotsprings Rally	Nakusp, BC
Sunday, August 23	Club BBQ	Chez Conrad
Saturday, September 5	Monthly Gathering	Pioneer House, Duncan
Sunday, September 20	Club Ride	Port Renfrew/Cowichan Loop
Thursday - Sunday, October 1 - 4	BMW RA National Rally	Harrison, Arizona