

March 2012 Willow Springs Reports

Written by Mad Dawg Antenucci

Sunday, 04 March 2012 19:53 - Last Updated Sunday, 04 March 2012 19:58

Jim & Shari Saxton's West Coast Racing Event (previously known as the Ferrari/Pantera Clubs joint event) was a blast yesterday.

A real bargain for \$145 for one day or \$215 for two days. I could hardly believe there is a photo of 20 Pantera's and their owners on the wall in the cafeteria....in the photo the Pantera's are all lined up on the track from 20 years ago....I don't know who the drivers were because all of them were young skinny guys with hair....someone told me the guy standing next to the black Pantera was me and that the black Pantera next to me was mine but that could not of been me because that guy in the photo had hair....lots of hair! ;-]>

Okay, Willow, if you haven't been there before has a great 2.5 mile 9-turn course with elevation changes and two long front and rear straights...a great track for a Pantera. Yea, for that little money Jim & Sheri's track event is a allota bang for the buck.

It was the first track event that I ran in SoCal in 1992 after I moved to Huntington Beach from SF. Sheri always puts on a big lunch at no additional cost and she spent alot of time just wondering around checking with drivers all day if they needed anything or had any problems....They offered me their garage....they asked me several times if I needed anything.....Yea I know I look like I need help.....and do.....but seriously Sheri is the Track Mom of all track moms.....and it was her chocolate chip cookies that helped. ;-]> Bill Nelson is still the same kick ass Race/Safety Director for Jim and Sheriand Bill is a major asset to that event....He is pro-active on everything without being in the way....but if you need him he will not ever hesitate to do his job. And he does his job well... They have the same driving instructor's available at no additional cost and most of them have been up there at Willow Springs for 20+ years. And most of the Ferrari club guys are still going except now most of them are all driving something else....okay there were about a half a dozen Ferrari's but nothing vintage. All great enthusiasts and very loyal to Jim's event.

There are the usual race groups (Green/Novice - or those with limited open track experience, then yellow and blue for those with varying experience.... and red being the full race group. On Saturday there looked to be about 50-60+ cars which worked out to 5 separate 20 minute run sessions....all runs went off without a hitch yesterday.

A couple cars broke but no Pantera's, accidents, or fires! And when someone did break they quickly cleared the track and cleaned up any oil or debris... and then got the cars running again quickly. All the course workers were experienced and did their jobs..... Lots of new young drivers (yea everyone younger then 64 is young to me) with the usual late model fast production cars.

Lots of emphasis on everyone just being safe first and having a good time second....and that hasn't changed in 20 years.... no trophy's or prize money.....just go have fun....The Shelby Club was well represented with vintage Shelby's and we had two Pantera's running yesterday. A Pantera owner from San Diego named Scott Bill who also brought his son who also raced the same Pantera....I got my yaya's out running my Pantera and nothing broke all day so after 4 runs I was happy to put it on the trailer at the end of the day. Engine oil and water temps never were a problem. And the only thing that broke was the hand winch on my trailer...again thanks again to Russ Fulps and Dick Drenske who set the engine and Pantera up. I need to adapt a kid to drive the Pantera faster. ;-]>

Dave & Linda Adler brought up a cup car as did Jeff Maxwell and Dale Ericksen....we had several Pantera owners with out Pantera's who just came up to hang out and watch the cars run or help Jim & Sheri with registration....and it was great seeing all of them too....I know I am

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leaving someone out here but Portageese Rod Kunishe, Art "Firefigher" Stephens, Bill "B-52" Harris were all there Saturday....and it was great to hang with them....but it would have been allot more fun if we had seen more Panteras run. . .At lest half a dozen other guys came up and introduced themselves to me whispering they also had Pantera's but they were in the garage! ;-]> HAH! Okay there is a lot of other stuff to do in Southern California when its 72F outside so I get it....okay maybe I don't! Anyway we all had fun....As Dale said, the Pantera racers always seemed to just have MORE fun! I can't remember that far back so I don't know ;-]>

Still, Scott's Pantera ran like a scalded monkey all day Saturday. He and his son are great enthusiasts and he takes some (okay allot) of ribbing for his LS1 Vette engine....and does it all with a big smile....but there is no argument for success as Scott's bow tie powered Pantera ran great and he and his son both had a smile on their faces the entire day. . .someone is gonna copy me (again) on what a sin it is that someone has put a Mopar or Chevy engine in a Pantera but frankly I don't care. Long as you don't put a Windsor in the Pantera everything is good ;-]> All I know for sure was I saw Scott driving his Pantera around the course blowing the doors off everything it passed and trust me the other drivers did not care what that Pantera was running for power.

Jim and Sheri's events are always in November and May (?) but if you are in SoCal, Nevada or Arizona you really (before you are dead or forget you have a Pantera in the garage need to come out and stretch its and your legs instead of driving your Toyota or Mustang not that I have anything against Toyota's or Mustangs..... or Mike's Serraco II ;-]>

Okay I should be ready for Phoenix in April and Silverstate in September. Off to Australia in May for work but I should be back in Sept for the 25th Anniversary of the Silver State.

Good Times!

Mad Dawg Antenucci

Team Pantera Racing

"No One Gets Out Alive"