

Chevy Performance to Host 'Ridler's Ball'

The 61st Anniversary Meguiars Detroit Autorama arrives at Cobo Center Friday, March 8, as America's hot rod show celebrates the 50th anniversary of the prized Ridler Award.

More than 1,000 examples of customized cars, trucks, vans, motorcycles and hot rods will be on hand to entice fans during the three-day event.

Hours are noon to 10 p.m. Friday, March 8; 9 a.m. to 10 p.m. Saturday, March 9; and 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Sunday, March 10.

"For this year's celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the Ridler Award, we are going all out," says Peter Toundas, show manager and president of Championship Auto Shows, Inc., producer of Detroit Autorama.

"We are kicking off the big event with a stellar Friday night that we are calling the 'Ridler's Ball,' at Cobo Hall, presented by Chevrolet Performance.

"The roster of attendees include a who's who of the hot rod custom car world across North America, and we will name the 50 most important car builders, owners, and designers who have contributed to the growth of the Ridler over its history. It's like our Oscars."

For those who've ever wondered how to "chop" an automobile to create a sleek, custom hot rod, custom car builder Gene Winfield will be on hand to oversee the demonstration of a live "chopping" of a car.

For hot rod fans who want to really feast their eyes, the entire 100,000 square feet of the lower level of Cobo Center will be filled

with the Detroit Autorama Extreme exhibit, featuring more than 200 traditional rods, customs and bobber bikes inspired by the 1950s. This successful addition to Autorama is now in its eighth year.

In a special tribute, three generations of the iconic Batmobile, from the Batman movies and the original TV show, will be on display and available for fans to get their picture taken with their favorite Batmobile version.

Friday morning will see the start of the returning Autorama Student Career Day. Now in its seventh year, this year's event is expected to bring more than 3,000 high school students from nearly 50 Michigan schools in to view presentations by hot rod builders and industry leaders on career opportunities in this growing field.

In addition to the Autorama Student Career day, Chrysler has announced the first Autorama High School Design Competition 2013, to benefit United Way of Southeastern Michigan, in cooperation with The College for Creative Studies in Detroit.

The program invites all students currently attending Detroit Public Schools to create their own design for a future luxury Chrysler brand vehicle, envisioned for the year 2030.

A panel of judges from Chrysler, CCS and Detroit Autorama will select winning entries from the freshman-junior class and senior class. Prizes will include a scholarship to the College for Creative Studies, summer design automotive classes at

CCS, iPads, tours of the Chrysler Product Design Office and free passes to Autorama.

Also, more than 200 of the most creative pinstripers will be busy all three days of Autorama applying their customized touches to items of almost every variety.

All proceeds from the sale of the items will go to benefit Leader Dogs for the Blind.

Admission is \$18 for adults, \$5 for children ages 6 to 12 at the gate. For more information, go to www.autorama.com.



1965 Ridler Award winner owned by Bob Massaron of Northville.

Macomb County Auto Thefts Increased 12 Percent - ATPA

H.E.A.T. (Help Eliminate Auto Thefts) commented on the 2011 auto theft statistics released by the Michigan Automobile Theft Prevention Authority (ATPA) in its annual report in February. Although the statistics continue to show a decrease in the number of vehicle thefts, Michigan is once again ranked as the state with the sixth highest total motor vehicle thefts in the nation.

"We're always pleased to see the number of statewide vehicle thefts decline," said Terri Miller, Executive Director of H.E.A.T. "However, that doesn't mean thieves aren't trying new ways to target drivers, their belongings and personal information. Thefts

may be down, but fraud, carjackings and other auto theft-related crimes continue to rise in Michigan communities."

Those auto theft-related crimes include online/Craigslist fraud with the sales of vehicles and parts; catalytic converter and tire and rim thefts; and re-tagging/cloning vehicles (swapping or duplicating VIN numbers).

2012 ATPA Annual Report highlights are based on the most recent data from 2011. Data for the 2012 calendar year will be available from the ATPA in February 2014.

Auto thefts in Michigan declined 6.5 percent from 2010. In

2011, 25,048 vehicles were reported stolen in Michigan, compared to 26,875 in 2010.

As Wayne County thefts decreased, Macomb County auto thefts increased by more than 12 percent and Oakland County thefts increased by over 25 percent from 2010 to 2011.

Outside of southeast Michigan, Genesee County thefts also increased by nearly 13 percent while Kent County thefts went down by nearly 15 percent.

H.E.A.T. offers rewards to tipsters of up to \$10,000 by reporting what they know to its 24/7 toll-free tip line (1-800-242-HEAT.) They paid out more than \$220,000 in 2011 and 2012.

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