

## *A Quick Report on our MGVR Focus Event at Infineon with CSRG*

Beautiful weather...tons of track time...a very technical and difficult track...Pebble Beach Sportscar Club...MG Owners Club...Lunch Saturday and Sunday courtesy Vicki Leonard and helpers...Tennessee MGVR Harry Gentry dices with West coast hotshoe Scott Brown in the All MG race...here is how it went down.

MGVRs who were not camping at the track started showing up at MGVR Headquarters Hotel Inn Marin Wednesday. By the time I showed up Thursday afternoon the parking area was full of trailers and cars from all over. Scott Brown's event poster was on prominent display in the window as I checked in, settled down and bummed a ride from my Julie to the track. At the track entrance was a Scott Brown focus event banner-the track displayed several banners in prominent locations around the facility. Tech, bench racing and beer consumption began in earnest with smiles all around.

Friday was another beautiful day with track testing in the am, and CSRG testing in the afternoon. CSRG offered two garage stalls for 'significant' MGs-included among these were the Ken Miles special "the Flying Shingle" and 1963 Sebring MGB. MGVR and CSRG board member Gary Anderson gathered MG racers new to Infineon (designated by big "G" on back of their race car) for a midday track and etiquette talk, joined by CSRG staff and track staff. Something must have stuck as incidents were almost nonexistent and behavior was exemplary over the course of the weekend. The balance of Friday track time was CSRG test and tune. Track time was already stacking up. Friday ended with a tour of Huffaker Engineering facilities. Those familiar with Huffaker Engineering can appreciate their connection with BMC and MG-Huffaker has several national champion MGs to their credit. Joe Huffaker Jr. led the tour of their clean room, dyno room, engine machine shop, chassis area and assembly area. A few MGVRs went on their own to take the 'self guided' tour of Huffaker's parts department. Joe Huffaker Sr. stopped by to sign some posters and to chat with the gathered racers. Many thanks to Huffaker Engineering and Scott Brown for scheduling this tour.

Saturday began as sunny and glorious as Friday. MGVRs enjoyed double the track time of other races as we had our own race group and CSRG race group races. Saturday included both practice and timed qualifying sessions. Some unfortunate racer blew an oil line in an early afternoon session and oiled the race line for TWO laps before finally pumping the last of his oil. 45 minutes and tons of speedy dry later the track reopened for Group 2 (fast small bore) qualifying. Good news-easy to find the line. Bad news-the line was a mess. Luckily problems were few and nearly everyone handled the track modification without mishap. For the record Infineon Raceway is the most difficult track I have had the pleasure of racing-fast, blind turns with elevation change, and not much room for error. Infineon is a thing of beauty when wrestled into submission-but make a mistake in turn 2, or turn 8a and things could get ugly. MG vintage racers appeared to at least feel comfortable with a most difficult course. By 5:30 racing was behind us and thoughts wandered to our banquet at Rickey's at Inn Marin.

Rickey's was at (maybe over...shhhh) legal capacity of 80 for Saturday's banquet. Event co-chair Jim Weissenborn put together a fabulous spread banquet with a full bar, wine bar featuring local wines (duh-we are in wine country after all), lots of desserts including cakes, cookies and other snacks. Dinner was flank steak, or chicken marsala with potatoes, beans, and garden salad along with a most tasty cornbread. After dinner we moved to the awards, storytelling and general gaiety with Jim W. leading the way by showing off racing pictures from 'the day', each picture with a unique story behind the characters (Miss Hurst Shifter, the local brothel, race winner with not enough room in his racer for the

rather rotund race queen to join him for a victory lap). This year's 'Door Prize', a genuine MGA roadster door, went to the Zbarskys' dog-a fixture in the paddock this weekend and a huge, lumbering teddy bear of a thing with a head the size of a Thanksgiving Day turkey. Other prizes, mostly donated by Jim Weissenborn and the Leonards, included Laguna Seca hats (toques as they call them in Canada), bottles of Stone Bridge wine from a Watkins Glen winery, and assorted shirts, and the Al Moss video featuring west coast racing in the 1950's. The Pebble Beach Sports Car Club, represented by Warren and Cathy Pierce, handed out three best in show trophies- 1940's & Prewar went to Dan Leonard's unique TC Special. 1950's went to David Good's beautiful MGA, and 1960's went to Mike Adams' ex-Al Pease MGB. The Pierce Manifold Weber Award went to Mark Brandow's beautiful and fast grey Weber carbureted MGA. Warren Pierce was quick to point out that they changed the criteria from "Weber equipped" to "Weber Powered" after hearing rumors that Scott Brown had schemed to bolt an old Weber carb to the floorboard of his sparkling MGA 'the Pile'. Foiled again, Scott! Longest tow went to Joe Lightfoot from Ontario(4570 km) , while the Car and Driver Trophy by TRL Race Engineering went to Jim Weissenborn's Byers MGA Special. Huffaker Engineering "Best Presentation of MG" went to Will Carson's Midget. Special guests for the evening included Joe Huffaker Sr., and Joe Huffaker Jr. Guest of honor for the evening was Bill Haener, who drove his MGB to victory at the first ever event at Sears Point!

Sunday dawned bright and shiny as had all our days in Sonoma. After a quick breakfast at Inn Marin everyone made the fifteen minute trip to Infineon to prepare for All MG and Group practice followed by races. Following our practice sessions CSRG held what they call a 'mechanic's picnic', where racers are allowed to gear up a passenger and take them for a trip around Infineon. This practice proved to be popular as there was no shortage of race cars with passengers being driven rather vigorously around the track. Following this folly came the group races. MGs were bunched in Group A (prewar, T Series and a few MGA) and Group B (faster MGA and MGB) for their CSRG group races. While I don't have group results for this report, I can tell you that MGs acquitted themselves quite well in both groups with Scott Fohrman (MGB), Harry Gentry(Midget), and Joe Lightfoot(MGB) running near the front of their race group, while I am fairly certain that David Good(MGA) and Don Martine(vonNeumann Special TD) were somewhere near the front of Group A. The final race of the day was the All MG race-most of us were chomping at the bit to show what we learned throughout the weekend. This half hour session saw some of the best racing action of the weekend with Scott Brown, Harry Gentry, and the Lamantia duo duking it out in the front of the pack, closely followed by Scott Fohrman and Joe Lightfoot. Your truly was a few seconds back dicing with Tom Tuttle, Malcolm Cox, and Brian McKie. Malcolm Cox had to be not far behind. Other action included Bob Schoeplein, Jim Weissenborn, Ralph Zbarsky (or his son Michael-I am not sure who ran the twin cam in this race) and Dick Powers, and the Prewar and T series dicing of Dan Leonard, Michael Jacobsen, Ernie Page Pete Thelander ,Jim Buell, and maybe Lawrie Alexander. I would assume that Tom Morgan and Dave Good were not far behind me dicing it out while Donald Dickey in his ex-Huffaker MGB was probably in front of me giving chase to Scott Fohrman. Don Martine got a bit sideways in turn 5 but in true west coast race fashion he dampened his finger, got a read on the wind, straightened things out and was on his way in short order. If I missed anyone, please forgive me I write this by memory. There was some attrition during the course of the weekend-Dave Smith lost a rod bearing, Malcolm Cox blew a head gasket but made necessary repairs, Will Carson met with an oily race line and came together with Donald Dickey; both were repaired by day's end Saturday. Mike Barstow had an engine mishap of unidentified nature early in the weekend, as did Mike Adams. So who won the race? Harry Gentry and Scott Brown separated themselves ever so slightly from the Lamantia gang and exchanged the lead almost every lap, with Harry Gentry pulling off the pass and the win on the last lap! I hear it was exciting.

Nobody could have asked for a better weekend of MG vintage racing. CSRG went way out of their way to make our guest racers feel comfortable and welcome. Many thanks to CSRG race director Tom Franges, and board member and MGVR Gary Anderson for contributing their considerable talent and influence to making this an unbeatable Focus Event. Thanks goes to the indestructible Scott Brown and inexhaustible Jim Weissenborn for their efforts on behalf of this event. Thanks also to Dan and Vicki Leonard for bringing and manning Regalia, and a special thanks to Vicki, Glen, Jane, and Joan (anyone I am missing?) for our Saturday and Sunday lunch buffets. High fives to Warren and Cathy Pierce, Pebble Beach Sports Car Club, and Pierce Manifolds for their enthusiasm and support of our focus event. Another 'thank you' goes to MG Owners Club for their hospitality table with donuts and other fan favorite snacks. One last thanks to the MG vintage racers who participated.

This was an 'over the top' event-ask anyone who participated.

Safety Fast...Chris Meyers

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