

# OLD DODGERS GATHER IN WINE COUNTRY

**L**ike good wine old Dodges seem to get even better as they mature. That's the only conclusion you could come to watching the passing parade of old Dodges on the 2010 National Rally run around the historic wine growing region of the Barossa Valley in South Australia in September.

As locals and tourists looked on in wonderment 60 or so old Dodges and their proud owners from all over the country and New Zealand gathered in the Barossa Valley for four days touring the district and taking in all the wonderful sights, sounds and smells it has to offer.

The rally was headquartered at Nuriootpa in the heart of the Barossa with a variety of interesting, and sometimes challenging, loops to points of interest each day. Nights were occupied with great dinners, fine wine, entertaining movies, fascinating talks and lots of laughs.

The rally kicked off with the "Eden Valley Run", a leisurely 36-mile run that allowed rally participants plenty of time to mix and mingle, particularly over a wonderful lunch at Saltrams Winery.

One of the day's many highlights was a tour of the Barossa Valley Machinery Club's shed in

Angaston by new DBCA member Peter Faint. Peter farms at Saddleworth, north of Nuriootpa, and joined the rally with his wife Wendy and daughters Emma and Louise. To the surprise, and delight, of experienced Dodge four drivers both Emma and Louise drove the rather feral 1924 Dodge 'tourer' with great aplomb while Peter sat back and enjoyed the ride in the back seat.

Not long before the rally the Dodge had been a typical farmer's buckboard, but to accommodate the family on the run Peter fitted it with some 'tourer' rear bodywork and a rear seat. Unfortunately he didn't have any rear doors, but that just seemed to add to its "well-used" charm.

At day's end everyone enjoyed a BBQ dinner and a talk by Moss Kaesler, the grandson of Gerhard 'Pop' Kaesler who built the Dodge-based home-on-wheels now on display at the Nuriootpa Tourist Park and toured the country in it in the 1930s. Pop's earlier attempt to build a 'motorhome', also based on a Dodge, was brought up from its present home in Goolwa to complete a rather unique reunion.

Day Two took the 'Dodgers' on the 'Hutton Run' with a morning tea stop for scrumptious scones, jam and cream at Bethany Reserve before heading on to the

'Whispering Wall' and then a lovely picnic lunch on the lawns at St. Hallett's winery.

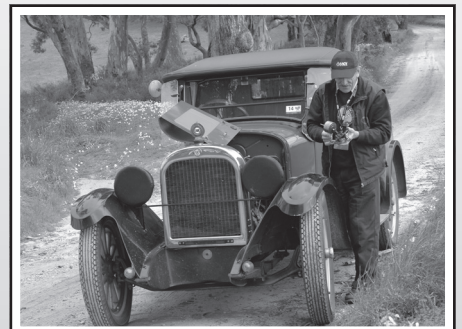
The 'Shueybarnes Run' was the feature of Day Three and took the Dodgey crew to Clare, with a stop at the aviation museum near Greenoch to look over the mostly WW2 aircraft.

After lunch at the Clare Hotel some took the chance to call in at the workshop of local restorer Graham Goode where they were able to inspect the cars under restoration, which included a vintage Dodge roadster.

The fourth, and final, day was the most challenging driving day. The 'Beanpurdie Run' offered Dodgers a choice of two courses, one more challenging than the other.

The more challenging 'Trial Hill' route was mostly dirt, but had a steep sealed section in the middle that had been purposely selected to put the Dodges and their drivers to the test. All successfully made it up the hill with typical Dodge tenacity, but a couple were observed to strike trouble shortly after the 'Hill'.

David Dewar's buckboard spluttered to a halt with a vacuum tank problem and Dennis Robertshaw was forced to resort to the "tapometer" to fix what was



diagnosed as a fuel problem with his 1927 Roadster.

After some roadside repairs both soldiered on to the lunch stop at The Company Kitchen, where the 'Trial Hill' crew met up with those who went on the more leisurely all-sealed 'Menglers Hill Run'.

The Farewell Dinner later that night was the last function on the program, and as usual it was also the chance to hand out some well-deserved awards. The deserved winners were, in no particular order:

- **Hard Luck Award**  
John and Sue Young who managed to lose their car for the first couple of days of the rally.
- **Hard Luck Award Runners-Up**  
Cled and Penny Davies whose Sedan broke a distributor drive on the way to the rally.
- **Most Popular Sedan**  
Arthur Sketcher and Malcolm Bean 1929 Victory 6.
- **Most Popular Tourer**  
David Braunack 1918 Tourer.
- **Most Popular Roadster**  
Norm Lehmann 1937 Convertible.
- **Special Interest**  
Ian and Joy McCorkelle 1926 Ambulance.
- **Longest Distance Driven to the Rally**  
John Allport and Robyn Mays who drove Tony Free's Victory 6 from Tasmania.
- **People's Choice**  
David and Melva Schumacher 1915 Tourer.

With the rally run and hardware handed out members of the organizing committee were finally able to draw breath and reflect on a job well done at the farewell breakfast at the Nuriootpa Bowling Club on the Friday morning.

It was there that members were able bid farewell to friends, old and new, before departing for home.

With the end of the rally the baton was passed to our Tasmanian members who have taken on the task of organising the 2012 rally. ●

