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Fleet Week Coronado Speed Festival Crosses Finish Line As Leader of the Pack

October 18, 2011 (SAN DIEGO, CA) – From celebrities to Camp Pendleton Marines, from vintage cars and aircraft to state-of-the-art fighter jets, the 2011 Coronado Speed Festival had something for everyone.

The 14th Annual [Fleet Week Coronado Speed Festival](#), held September 24-25, was a great location for a little celebrity stargazing. Of course, Honorary Grand Marshal Boris Said didn't disappoint, opening the ceremonies and graciously signing autographs. Mark Christopher Lawrence from NBC's *Chuck* could be spotted taking in the racing action, and Adam Carolla was himself a driver of his own Datsun racecar again this year. "It's a good weekend and a good cause," said Carolla, host of *The Car Show* on Speed TV. "There's good people and good camaraderie." Now in his fourth year racing at Coronado Speed Festival, Carolla has designated the event to be his home track.

At the inaugural Stock Car Race Series Military Pit Crew Challenge, Team USMC from Camp Pendleton gave it their best Semper Fi try, but it was Team Black Plague, a Helicopter C Combat Squadron team from North Island that won top prize. Modeled after the NASCAR Pit Crew Challenge held every year in Charlotte, North Carolina, the competition consisted of eight teams of 10 members who were timed as they recreated an actual pit stop, including pushing a Stock Car between two lines (evoking a NASCAR hot-pit box), jacking it up, changing all four tires, fueling it and then pushing the car out of the box and across the finish line.

Coronado Speed Festival this year also celebrated the Centennial of Naval Aviation at its birthplace, Naval Air Station North Island. The Navy had provided a visual display of the evolution of Naval aviation with static displays of jets, planes and helicopters at the entrance to the event. Lieutenant Ian Austen was able to start at one end of the vintage aircraft display and tell the story of what each one did, when it did it, and how the particular aircraft has evolved into newer makes and models.

Lt. Austen's reasoning for knowing so much about aircraft that are more than twice his age is that he's "just a history geek." Growing up in Maine, PBS was the only channel that came in all the time, he said.

Attendees of this year's event could do more than just watch the racing action, they could get behind the wheel of some of the hottest cars on the market, courtesy of BMW and Chevrolet. Chevy celebrated its 100th anniversary at Coronado Speed Festival by bringing eight brand new models of Camaros and Corvettes for spectators to test drive through a winding track marked out with cones.

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It's not every day Chevy lets just anyone behind the wheel of a \$100,000 car but spokesperson Shad Balch says, "Why not? It's the hundred-year anniversary. People don't get the chance to do this often. Let's give them a shot."

BMW, this year's official sponsor of the event, also let attendees zip around their track in brand-new Beemers at tire-screeching speeds.

"Being out here really exemplifies what the BMW brand is about. We are about motor sports, we're about honoring our country and our men and women who serve our country," said spokesperson Lauren Smith.

Of course, Coronado Speed Festival's main attraction is the racing, and the nine race groups this year did not disappoint. The 2011 winners are:

Group 1 1952-1959 Sport & Prod Drum Brakes	Cameron Healy, 1953 Porsche Pooper
Group 2 1962-1972 Sports Racing and Formula Cars-under 2000cc	Dave Vegher, 1969 Chevron B-15
Group 3 1969-1980 Sports Racing & Formula Cars	Dan Marvin, 1976 March 76B
Group 4 1953-1966 Production Cars under 2000c	Dennis Racine, 1966 Morris Mini Cooper
Group 5 1959-1966 Production Cars - Disc Brakes	Victor Avila, 1965 Lotus 26R
Group 6 1962-1966 Production Cars over 2500cc	John Goodman, 1964 Cobra
Group 7 1965-1988 FIA Manufacturer Championship Cars	Ken Davis, 1985 Mercury Capri
Group 8 Historic NASCAR 1972-	Jim Hague, 1988 Pontiac Grand Prix
Group 9 1966-1972 Historic Trans-Am	Ken Adams, 1969 Ford Boss 302

About Coronado Speed Festival and Fleet Week San Diego

The Coronado Speed Festival is Fleet Week San Diego's preeminent event. Fast-paced, thrilling auto racing and exhibitions for car enthusiasts of all ages mark the widespread draw of this event. Staged at one of racings' most distinctive locations – Naval Air Station North Island, the birthplace of Naval Aviation – it's the only place to see live racing on an active U.S. Navy runway.

The San Diego Fleet Week Foundation is a nonprofit, public benefit corporation. In addition to honoring the military services through the annual Fleet Week events, the Foundation's goals are to foster awareness of the contributions made by enlisted military personnel and their families, to enhance relationships between the civilian, business and military communities, to provide events that military personnel and their families can attend at little or no cost, and to raise funds for charitable efforts benefiting enlisted service members and their families.

For more information, or for a complete listing of all of the Fleet Week events, please visit www.fleetweeksandiego.org or you can find us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/fleetweeksd or follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/fleetweeksd.

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