

GROUPS

Lube jobs

Dipstick Lesbians and Dykes with Hot Rods rev into their second year, seek new members with clean cars

BY KATY DAVIDSON



PHOTOS BY KATY DAVIDSON

What a set of headlights! Dinah, La Bamba and Muffy line up

Portlanders might typically reserve sunny Sunday mornings for sleeping in, mowing the lawn, then subjecting themselves to a day's worth of passive entertainment.

The Dipstick Lesbians and Dykes with Hot Rods tend to toss such ideas toward the junkyard.

One morning, bright and early, I pulled up to their North Portland meeting place in my somewhat clunky, mostly filthy 1981 Volvo sedan (mustard yellow). I spied a group of three women hunkered on the front steps of a house, donning sunglasses, smoking and seeming like they shared a great secret.

"I think I broke your club's rule by not washing my car," I said apologetically.

They chuckled and said it was no big deal.

The self-described core members of this year-old social group are Rachel Koteles, Devioune Mayin-Daviau and Margaret O'Hartigan. They all happen to live within a block of one another, and they all happen to own cars that were built before disco exploded.

Koteles' baby is "La Bamba," a 1959 Chevrolet Impala with a 1970 Corvette engine, "as close to a race engine as you can legally drive," she crowed. The phrase *chicas malas* ("bad girls" in Spanish) is painted on the exterior behind the rear tire, and across the rear shelf Koteles has stretched a Mexican flag.

Mayin-Daviau told me the Impala is a "cleavage car," a description denoting the rounded trunk that protrudes like bulging breasts.

"She saved her from a barn," Mayin-Daviau added with a tinge of envy.

Sure enough, Koteles admitted she snagged the Impala from the safe arms of a stable. It had broken down many years before, and the original owner, instead of repairing the damage, covered it up and let it sit. Then Koteles bought it for \$200 and has spent 18 years transforming it into the gentle beast it is today.

"Some people call it the Martian Ground Chariot," she said.

She added that she was originally turned on to hot rods when her cousin, a Hell's Angel, used her family's garage to work on his car when she was 10 years old. "I've always been around the hot rod community," she said.

On the exterior, Mayin-Daviau's and O'Hartigan's cars look as cool as a drink of water, but their engines rev like any other respectable hot rod.

Mayin-Daviau owns and maintains "Dinah," a peacock-blue, four-door 1962 Chevrolet Bel Air. Her latest car toy is a tissue dispenser that swings out from underneath the dash.

O'Hartigan drives "Muffy," a 1967 white Ford Galaxy. She told me she was originally drawn to the Galaxy when she was

younger because her uncle owned one—"It's my all-time favorite car. I just react to the lines," she said.

O'Hartigan gets a little grief for being the only Ford owner of the group. Koteles and Mayin-Daviau explained to me that letters in Ford truly stand for "fix or repair daily," and "found on road dead"—all in good fun, of course.

After admiring the inner workings of La Bamba, Koteles fired up her space-shuttlelike engine and the four of us pulled away for an early morning cruise. I rode shotgun in La Bamba, while Dinah and Muffy followed closely behind us.

The drive through the neighborhood was smooth, and our showy caravan turned a few heads. When we arrived at the freeway on-ramp, however, we burst onto I-5 like hoodlums running from the law. The Batmobile had nothing on us.

Windows down, we bolted out to Delta Park, then parked our cars so all the noses pointed outward. Then we got out, basked in the sun and blasted some golden oldies. Mayin-Daviau said she likes to spin Diana Ross and the Shirelles when she drives.

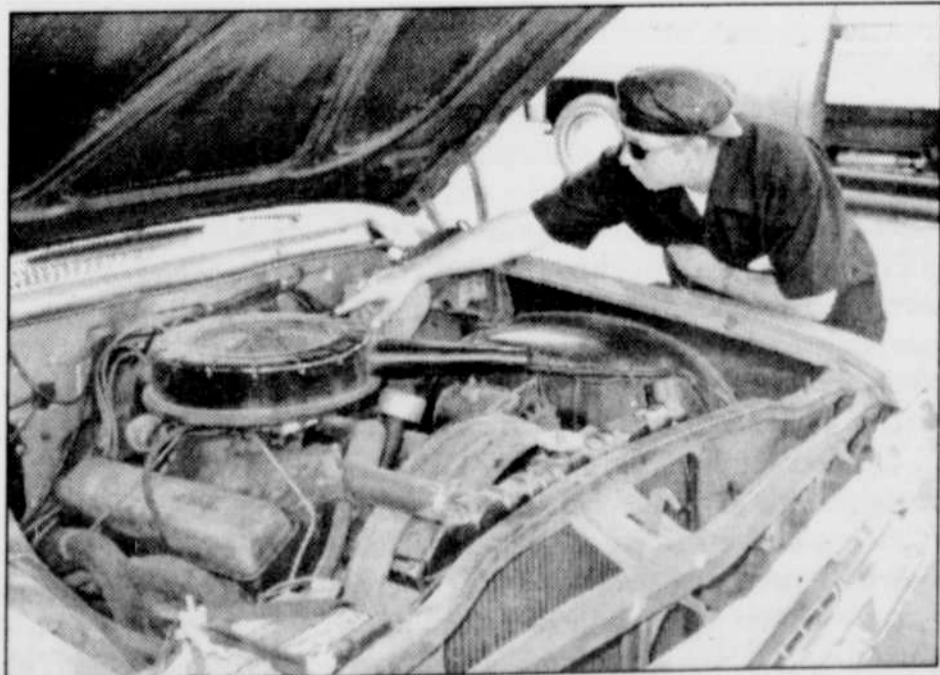
The women told me that people are too intimidated to join the group because they don't think their cars are good enough. Koteles said you can have any car and still join, as long as you keep your car clean. Or, if you just feel like cruising, you can always ride shotgun in someone else's hot rod.

"We're always looking for seat covers," Mayin-Daviau added.

Summer is the cruising season, according to the Dipstick Lesbians and Dykes with Hot Rods. The women will caravan to the Sandy Cruise-In on July 8, and hold a picnic at Sellwood Park on July 30.

■ For more information about the DIPSTICK LESBIANS AND DYKES WITH HOT RODS, call (503) 735-1184.

Devioune Mayin-Daviau points out the inner workings of La Bamba



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