

CAR CHRONICLES —

Jeeps — part one: Old Jeeps



By CAL APPLEBEE
Special to the Siuslaw News

I was nearly half-way through my car collection before I acquired my first Jeep. Probably like a lot of kids and car nuts, I'd always had a fascination with Jeeps but just hadn't gotten there yet. At the time, I was entrenched in VWs and when Jeeps started catching my attention, I actually was researching a kit-car approach. Someone offered a "Veep" — a Jeep body mounted on a VW chassis. During that process I came across my first Jeep, a 1969 DJ5A.

The dispatch Jeep may be familiar with a lot of folks as the mail jeep, which many of them were in the 1960s and 1970s.

But Kaiser, who owned the Jeep marquee at the time, actually produced the first dispatch Jeep in the 1950s as a CJ3 variant, used a lot by

service stations, pharmacies and other businesses as delivery vehicles. They sported hard tops with sliding doors, conventional left-hand drive and three speed transmission but were offered only in rear-wheel drive with a solid front axle.

The second generation, based on the CJ5 platform, came with a two-speed automatic power glide transmission and four-cylinder engine out of the Chevy II.

My first DJ5A was a lot of fun. I removed the sliding doors, cut off the top and modified the body to resemble an M38A1 military version, painting it Navy grey, of course. I found two more DJ5A's and picked them up and when I moved from California back to Oregon in the mid-1990s, I brought them all.

Just prior to that move I had also acquired my first military vehicle, a 1954 M38A1 — but it didn't survive the move or the divorce.

The first generation of military jeep was built by three companies — American Bantam Car Co., Ford Motor Company and Willys/Overland in response to Government contracts for World War II.

From 1941 through 1945, over 646,000 military Jeeps were built, primarily by Ford and Willys, and in post-war

years, while Ford went back to focusing on civilian cars and trucks, Willys capitalized on the iconic Jeep and continued production.

Over the years since my first acquisition, I have owned and re-built several CJs and military Jeeps, and have enjoyed not just the joy of completing the project and driving them, but also greatly enjoyed the interaction with others for whom those vehicles invoke memories — particularly veterans.

One of my favorite project Jeeps came just a couple years ago after a particularly stressful Rhody Festival.

I decided it was time for another project and started the hunt, which is always a fun part of the process.

Not finding any worthy candidates in my price range, I decided to simply take all the left over parts from past projects and start there, filling in the gaps via shopping on Craigslist, swap meets and restoration catalogs.

When I finished the Jeep it had both CJ and military parts ranging in age from 1944 fenders to the front bumper from a 1969 DJ5A mail Jeep.

When finished I christened it "Phoenix" — like the legendary bird who rose up from the ashes to fly again. This Jeep rose up from the junk pile to drive again.

At the Oregon Coast Military Museum, we currently have on display a very unique WWII military Jeep on loan from a veteran who restored it with the help of a close friend.

This 1942 Ford GPW is one of only about seven percent of what are considered Very Early Production Jeeps and further has the distinction of being one of four 12-volt radio Jeeps that served at Camp Young in California when General George S. Patton served as its first commander in 1942.

There are several features on this jeep that make it a part of that unique class, including the 12-volt system from the factory, "Ford" script stamped into the rear panel, and the fact that it is a Ford body mounted on a Willys chassis because Ford hadn't yet started manufacturing their own frames.

Not content with just my Wrangler daily-driver, I just brought home yet another old Jeep, a 1948 CJ2A that has a lot of promise.

That brings the total number of Jeeps owned up to 25, and the total number of vehicles owned — at least up until now — to 97.

Who knows — by the time this series ends, we may just hit that century mark.

Travel Safe!

Local stables announce return of horse club

Area equestrians can once again be part of the C&M Stables Horse Club, which will be starting up again this Friday, Sept. 16, for kids ages of 6 to 18.

Horse Club meets every Friday during the school year (except for school holidays) from 4 to 5 p.m. until the end of May.

Each week, the club builds on the skills learned in the previous weeks and uses hands-on techniques to help participants learn safety around horses, grooming and riding.

The program also reviews horse and tack parts and pro-

vides written handouts on the major parts of the program.

By the end of the year, the goal is for the kids to have learned the basic fundamentals of horsemanship, how much fun it is to ride and what wonderful animals horses are.

To sign up for Horse Club, stop by C&M Stables at 90241 Highway 101, eight miles north of Florence. The stables are open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. seven days a week.

C&M Stables was established by Jeff Chastain, a Florence native, in 1981.

For more information, call 541-997-7540.

Wine tasting to highlight new boutique winery

The Pinot Noir and Pinot Gris wines of Campbell Lane Winery will be the featured attraction at the fourth annual "Wine, Women and Who Knows What?" scheduled for Sunday, Oct. 16, from 5 to 7 p.m. at the Florence Events Center, 715 Quince St.

"We are lucky to be the first to introduce the fine wines of Campbell Lane to connoisseurs in the Florence area," said event co-chair Paula Becker.

A private preview event with the winemakers from Campbell Lane will begin at 4 p.m. and will include a visual history of the winery and a blind tasting of 2014 and 2015 Pinot Noirs.

Located near West Linn, at the north end of the Willamette Valley, Campbell Lane has been perfecting its grapes for 30 years.

"We think we grow some of the best Willamette Valley Pinot Gris grapes and that affects the wines that we craft," said winemaker Andy Parks. "It's not only our 30-year-old vines and the conditions they're grown in. It could also have a lot to do with the courage and hospitality that has gone and continues to go into



COURTESY PHOTO

The flavor of fine Pinot Gris builds in the cellars of Campbell Lane Winery.

the maintenance and care for our Willamette Valley Pinot Gris grapes, as well as our Willamette Valley Pinot Noir."

In addition to the private preview tasting, Campbell Lane will also be one of the

five featured wineries at the main tasting beginning at 5 p.m.

Food pairings for all wines will be prepared by the culinary arts students at Siuslaw High School under the direction of instructor Kyle Lewis.

In addition to the tastings, a silent auction will feature many local artists and an extravagant collection of themed gift baskets.

"It's the perfect place to start your Christmas shopping," said event co-chair Susan Johnson.

A ticket that includes both the private preview and the main tasting is \$30. A ticket for the main tasting only is \$25.

All proceeds from the event go to provide scholarships, loans and grants to local women pursuing higher education.

To purchase tickets, call 541-991-3099 or 541-999-9082.

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