

A drive down memory lane

Nearly 200 classics on display at 19th annual Woodies on the Wharf



JON WEIAND/SENTINEL

TOP: A young visitor walks through a row of classic woodies at the 19th edition of Woodies on the Wharf in Santa Cruz on Saturday. ABOVE: Row of classic woodies line the Santa Cruz Municipal Wharf for the 19th edition of Woodies on the Wharf on Saturday.

Event >

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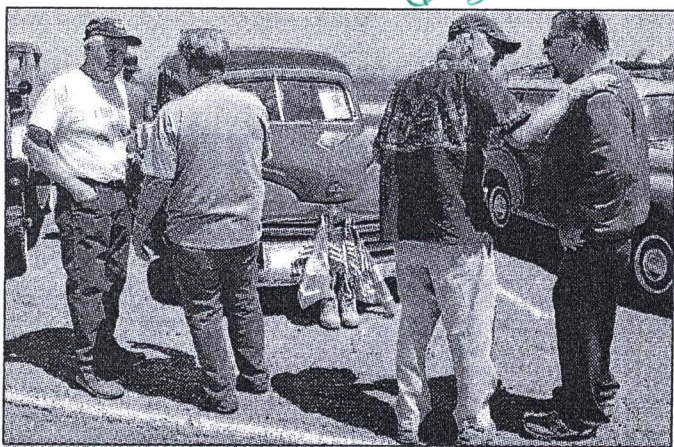
SANTA CRUZ — Campbell resident Rich Bloechl, owner of a perfectly-polished candy apple red 1947 Ford woodie, hasn't missed a single Woodies on the Wharf since the car show started 19 years ago.

Bloechl, 65, purchased his vintage beach station wagon in 1986 and spent four long years restoring it to pristine condition, including preserving the original smooth maple side panels that make that generation of cars stand out from other classics.

"They're rare. Only so many were made," he said. "There's just something about wood on a car that holds fascination for a lot of people."

Fascination for the nearly 200 cars framed in wood drew several thousand people to the Santa Cruz Municipal Wharf on Saturday for a chance to see the cars up close, travel down

SEE WOODIES ON C3



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A group of woodie enthusiasts chat near a military memorial during Woodies on the Wharf in Santa Cruz on Saturday.

WOODIES

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memory lane and chat with car owners.

The show is a joint effort between the Santa Cruz Woodies club and the city Parks and Recreation Department, bringing big crowds to wharf merchants each June.

The woody is the kind of car that makes folks like Mark Erickson of Berkeley want to wax his surfboard and head out to the beach.

Erickson, 66, said seeing all of the woodies on display brought him back to the early 1960s when the Beach Boys were popular and surfing was taking off in Southern California.

"In those days it was just a cheap junk car," he said. "The woody brings back



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A visitor walks through a row of woodies during the Woodies on the Wharf event in Santa Cruz on Saturday.

an era that was wonderful in California. It was just a magical time."

Chad Webb of San Jose and his friend Romeo Bermillo, a Fremont resident, said they have a strong appreciation for the hard work that keeps the cars

running and looking so good over the decades.

Saturday was their first visit to the car show.

"I'm an active old car guy. I grew up going to all the car shows," Webb said. "The craftsmanship that goes into these cars is incredible."

Bermillo echoed his friend's awe for the well-kept classics.

"I love everybody's creativity, everybody's vision for their cars," Bermillo said. "I know it takes a lot of blood, sweat and tears to restore these cars. I know it takes a lot."

San Jose resident Rick Helin bought his 1946 Ford Super Deluxe woody at the Santa Cruz show 18 years ago.

He said he agreed to pay \$22,000 for the shiny "glade green" station wagon with mahogany siding without taking it for a test drive.

On Saturday, Helin had the car for sale for \$75,000, which he said is about \$20,000 less than its appraised value.

"It's fun to drive, really fun to drive," he said. "It's time for someone else to enjoy it as much as I have."