

# Cruiz-In...from Page 1A



**Then and now, porch pickin' is a popular pastime in mountain culture, including at the annual Moonshine Cruiz-In.**  
Photo by Lowell Nicholson

River Gorge made the journey worth every single mile.

"We do shows all over the place, but this is the first one we've been able to do in a long while, so we just needed to get out of the house," Serou said. "The area is absolutely gorgeous. We came up through Cleveland (Tennessee), and the drive was unbelievable. We don't have mountains in Louisiana, and the trip was super nice."

The couple learned about the car show through Cruiz-In regulars Bob and Susan Anderson of Cleveland, Tennessee, whom they met at another event and became fast friends – likely due to their shared love of Dodge cars.

As for the show itself, Serou gave the event A-plus marks across the board.

"The people here have been incredibly nice," he said. "You walk around, everyone tells you 'hello,' and they are all just genuinely great people. Even the people in charge are really nice, and that's not usually the case."

With COVID-19 remaining a threat, event organizers provided extra safety measures for participants and spectators. Handwashing stations were located at the front gate, while frequent signs reminded patrons to practice physical distancing.

And when 6 feet of space isn't enough, Michael Cantrell's 1977 raven black Ford Bronco with a triple-deuce, 302 cubic-inch, V-8 engine has no trouble reaching even the most secluded destinations.

A Jasper resident, Cantrell purchased the first-generation Bronco in 1994, and despite previously attending

the Moonshine Cruiz-In, last weekend marked the first time his 1977 Ford joined him.

"I came up here and just walked around about two years ago, but this year, I finally decided to bring my Bronco," Cantrell said. "I really enjoy the relaxed atmosphere, and everyone is very friendly."

The Cruiz-In got underway on Thursday morning with registration and a scenic 50-mile cruise. At 5:30 p.m., participating vehicles gathered at the fairgrounds for a kickoff parade through Downtown Hiwassee.

With display booths up and running Friday, July 31, the opening ceremonies commenced at 1 p.m., featuring remarks from Cruiz-In Founder Raikes Parrish, Towns County Sole Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw and Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds General Manager Hilda Thomason.

Stephen Heabener delivered the invocation, after which Tommy Townsend performed the national anthem.

Following the opening

ceremony, singer/entertainer Todd Herendeen hosted his "God and Country" and "Elvis and Friends" music shows, and the second day of the Cruiz-In concluded with an evening concert by country music recording artist T. Graham Brown at Anderson Music Hall.

For the fifth consecutive year, Eddie Robbins of Winston-Salem, North Carolina, made the trip to Hiwassee with friends and family.

Robbins added to the abundance of hot rods in Towns County over the weekend with his custom-built 1964 Corvette convertible, which was certainly among the fastest.

Sporting a 572-cubic-inch engine that produces over 720 horsepower, the classic 'Vette was completed in 2012, with Robbins quick to point out that he drives it to every show.

And the Moonshine Cruiz-In is one of his favorites, despite the rapidly changing weather.

"We love coming out

here and setting up in the shade, relaxing, meeting people and looking at cars," he said. "I'm not a fan of the rain, but one of the good things about this show, we can always move (the car) inside."

"It's just a great event.

Our group brings five cars down from Winston-Salem, and we look forward to it every year."

On Saturday, the Pioneer Village featured live music by Jerry and Ronnie and The Sea Notes. Displays included

blacksmiths, sawmills, a moonshine still and more.

The three-day event wrapped up Saturday night with a Moonshine Sour Mash party at the Lake Chatuge Lodge, with freshly cooked food and music by Steve Bryson.



**Shylan Wood worked a sawmill demonstration in Pioneer Village at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds during the 2020 Moonshine Cruiz-In.**  
Photo by Lowell Nicholson