

Still recovering from the 2003 National Microcar Meet...

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In the last issue of Minutia, Ernie Freestone, our dedicated editor, lamented that nothing was sent in about the National Meet at Bruce Weiner's spread in Madison, Georgia. That made me feel a little sheepish about not contributing something (your ploy worked, Ernie...). But I do have a good excuse: I was still recovering! Fortunately, in the last several days, my knees have stopped knocking, the ground has stopped wavering, and my vision has cleared. Now, dear Minutia readers, I can tell my story...

The 2003 microcar National Meet was a humdinger. In my humble opinion, this was due to Bruce Weiner's hospitality and pairing our show with a group of maniacs called the Vespa Club of America. First, let's talk about Bruce's hospitality. Bruce has a heck of a spread in Madison, Georgia. There's the microcar museum, which is absolutely stunning, and the grounds of Dubble Bubble Acres that include a little 'race' track, hiking trails, a pool, fire pits, farm animals, and lots and lots of room for fun and debauchery with scooters and little cars.

The food and drink was amazing for an event like this. Grub for a big crowd is usually like something you'd get on a flight to Cleveland: something yellow, something green, and something that might be chicken. Not at this meet. They rolled in a brick pizza oven one night and made homemade pizzas that were absolutely terrific. On another night they rolled in a bar-b-que pit (something a Texan can really appreciate...) and served up some deep-roasted cow. Side dishes not only included the standard artery and colon cloggers, but also healthy stuff like couscous and fruit. My girlfriend, who is finickier than Morris the Cat, actually enjoyed the food: A truly amazing thing for her at a car show.

"Microbrews for microcars!" the proprietor yelled. That's right: BEER! Lipsmacking, a few dollars a big ole cup of cold beer. We need this curious miracle drink at future microcar meets... And I know by the smiles and comments of other microcar aficionados, others would agree. I don't know how much beer was drunk, but we may have drained Madison dry. When Wendy and I stopped at a convenience store in Madison to get some water to fight dehydration, the lady behind the counter asked "Are you with those little car people?" I couldn't tell if it was an innocent inquiry, a trick question, or a police sting. "Yes..." I warily replied. "Well," she said, "I've never worked so hard in my life these past two days. We've never sold so much beer. I told all of my friends that if you see any of those little motorcycles coming at you to get out of the way 'cause every last one of 'em is drunk!"

Speaking of drunk people on little motorcycles, the Vespa Club of America was a hoot to hang out with during the meet. A few of our more seasoned members probably don't agree with me, but then again, they may have feared for their lives. The Vespa crowd kept their scooters and themselves well lubricated and got rowdier as the day (and beer) flowed on. A number of them may have watched Quadrophenia one too many times, but it was quite enjoyable to be out people and tattoo watching (Brief aside: I wonder why

microcar folks don't get their marquee inked into their flesh? Is it because it's hard to fit 'Messerschmitt' onto a forearm and then later discover that 'Kleinschnittger' is really your one true love?). Scooters were buzzing everywhere. You didn't look both ways to cross the road, you looked everyway to cross anywhere.

The fun didn't stop when the sun went down. There was a DJ and a bon fire one night and live music the next. First up was a rockabilly band that was pretty good, but the real treat was a spunky all-girl punk band from Atlanta called Catfight! A number of their songs were about cars. One of the songs, called 'Backseat Baby,' prompted the lead singer to ask "Yell out a microcar with a backseat!" to which I and others yelled back "Messerschmitt!" (I also heard "Zundapp Janus!" and "600!"). "Messer-what?" she asked. After a brief pronunciation lesson, she warily warbled "I'm not sure how this is going to work..." The drums started, the bass kicked in, we heard the jangle of guitars, and then the singer yelled suddenly: "I wanna do it with ya in the back of your Messerschmitt!" It was a sweet microcar-punk moment.

After the band played, there were nude Vespa rides around the track (perhaps an event we should have in our little cars next year ???). The scooter people took the party back to their hotel and were finally wore out, reportedly, at 7:00 am (my guess is the beer ran out).

I haven't said much about the cars, but the cars were great and so were the people. I always enjoy crossing paths with the wonderfully energetic Jim Janecek (you guessed it: we drank a beer together), I got to meet the guys that got a lot of my money while I was restoring my Isetta, Werner and Hans (While talking to Hans, I told him that my girlfriend has a German horse and rides dressage [a German specialty], and he thought that was interesting because his daughter has a horse and rides Western [a Texas specialty]). I wanted to meet George Blau, but all I saw were his gimme hats on various non-Blau heads. I got a ride in a Smart car and a Heinkel. I got a molded Isetta. I got microcar candy. I got a microbrew hangover.

I'm not one to do things twice, especially halfway across the country. But if the national show is held on Dubble-Bubble Acres again, I plan on being there. And if it is, I plan on bringing my car so I can take one of those clothing-optional tours around the track!