



DRAGSTALGIA

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If push came to shove and I had to choose just one single drag racing event to attend, then it would be the three-day celebration of nostalgia racing that is Dragstalgia.

Billed as the largest nostalgia drag racing event outside of the U.S.A. it has everything a petrolhead craves for a great weekend's entertainment. Great venue: check. Santa Pod is arguably the most famous drag strip outside of America. Great facilities: check. All day authentic nostalgia racing: check. Show and shine arena: check. Beer festival for the non-drivers: check. Camping facilities: check. Live music: check. Great atmosphere with many attendees dressed in period clothing: check. For 2022 add three days of non-stop sunshine and a track side media pass and I was in heaven.

Nostalgia events are currently very en vogue and while I'm sure some of those attending are there trying to re-create a rose-tinted past, as some feel is the case with other historic motorsport events, the racing at Dragstalgia is right in the here and now. The cars may be from a bygone age, left behind by technical and aerodynamic advances, as well as the demands of sponsors to move to the latest body shells to shift units from the showroom or parts from the tuning catalogue, but the racing is competitive, close and extraordinarily quick.

Close to the action you begin to become aware that as the body shapes change, so often does the fuel propelling them. Each competing class is a lesson in the development of the sport and the never-ending quest for traction. The cars racing in Gasser Circus are inspired by, and pay tribute to, the legendary Gasser wars of the sixties. The nose in the sky stance which cocks a snoot at the principles of aerodynamics was all about getting traction in rear tyres that hadn't kept up with the progress made in engines and transmissions. Did it work? Roarin' Rat, a '57 Chevy and probably the best known of this Gasser style in Europe, runs the quarter mile in around 10.48 seconds which is the same as a Lamborghini Aventador, a car 60 years its junior.

The funny cars racing in the Nostalgia Cannonball owe their name to the racers in the sixties moving the rear axle forward on their superstock cars and fitting large tyres which made the car look a little 'funny'. Times are also quicker reflecting the improved aerodynamics, with the eventual winner Tim Garlick in the Apache, a 1977 Pontiac Firebird bodied flopper covering in the quarter mile a little over six seconds and reaching a jaw dropping 223 mph.

The almost complete lack of advertising on the cars indicates that this is a sport in which people compete because of a deep passion and certainly not the money. A morning spent in the pits reveals multi-generational pit crews all pitching in to get the cars to the start line. Many of the teams dress up for the day with a prize on offer for best dressed crew.

The Superstock class appears visually to be the exception to the above with the cars plastered with advertising and decals. A little digging reveals the majority are again tributes and a lot of detailed research has gone into ensuring that the paintjobs and decals accurately reflect the period in time when these cars were factory-sponsored and money was no object.

Dragstalgia, a weekend like no other. Loud, fast with the added bonus of flames, nitro, zoomie exhausts and a chance to get out the dressing up box. Don't miss it in 2023.

