

Cars gather in Northport for PBS documentary

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Nearly 40 hot rods and muscle car owners came out Sunday morning to help make movie magic happen in Northport.

Keith Famie, metro Detroit native, director, and producer of the upcoming documentary called “Detroit: The City of Hot Rods and Muscle Cars,” filmed with his crew in the early hours of Sunday, capturing local automobile enthusiasts gathering and driving into Haserot Park. The sunny weather and blue skies made for perfect shooting conditions, as Famie said his crew got everything and more that they needed.

“It was such an invigorating and impactful experience to be around individuals who have such a lengthy history in the automotive world through design or engineering, car aficionados, building, things of that nature. It’s going to shine a really powerful light on the northern Michigan, Traverse City/Leelanau community, and how the rebels are still alive and well,” Famie said. “I think that I would be so sad knowing what I know now in what we captured had we not done this — the weekend couldn’t have possibly gone any better and it brought together such a diverse community.”

The new car documentary in the making is set to release on Father’s Day weekend next year. It will feature notable and familiar faces like Darin Irvine, Bill Collins, Jerry Palmer, Keith Ashley and Dan McDavid. The segments highlight the Leelanau peninsula’s collector car culture, but the entire project will ultimately capture the unique Detroit muscle car community and how Motor City iron has reached across the globe and shaped world culture.

Darin Irvine, owner of Custom Automotive Restoration LLC in Northport and organizer of the annual Cars in the Park auto show, was one of the many locals interviewed by Famie. The entire process, from working with the film crew to get different shots in his workshop to reminiscing about the influence his father and grandfather had on him, was special for both him and his family.

“It was a great experience — everything from the quintessential hot rods from the 1930s with modern motors in them and muscle cars from the 60s and 70s like GTOs, Camaros, and Mustangs were there (Sunday)... people were very supportive and enthusiastic. There were quite a few people that came that brought their father or fathers brought their sons with them, it was nice that that was part of it.”

The final two hour-long film will debut on Detroit Public Television (PBS) as a holiday special in 2023, and will premiere at the Henry Ford, with classic muscle cars and hot rods also on display. With media, community leaders, celebrities, and other supporters present, some of the proceeds from the premiere gala will benefit five local Michigan charities. There are also plans to show the film at a location in Leelanau with details of when and where set to release at a later date. To learn more about the project, people can go to

<https://detroitmusclecarfilm.com>.



Local automobile enthusiasts gathered at Haserot Park in Northport Sunday morning for a scene in the upcoming documentary. Darin Irvine, owner of Custom Automotive Restoration LLC and organizer of the annual Cars in the Park autoshow, is seen with a picture of his father, George, at his workshop in Northport. Bill Collins, the father of the GTO, was also interviewed. Photos by Keith Famie