



The Racing Racines Run Against Each Other

If you own a classic or new Mini, you've probably met or dealt with Don Racine, owner of Mini Mania. Don has been into Minis for about 35 years or so and says he was racing them before racing Minis was called "Vintage." His current vintage race Mini (the 'Monty') is a 1966 Morris Mini Cooper S that he built as a racecar some 25 years ago and it has been campaigned by Don and his employees ever since.

A few years ago, Don's son, Dennis, who had raced only a few times over the years, got a renewed interest in vintage racing and has been the car's exclusive driver for the past couple of years. When the opportunity came for Don to acquire a yellow 1961 Cooper S dubbed, Bumblebee (about a year ago), Dennis bugged Don until he bought it. He wanted to race against his Dad.

Before long, Don's daughter, Julie, saw how much time Dennis and Don were spending with the cars and wanted to get in on the action. Julie had also done a couple vintage races in one of Don's old cars and convinced Dennis to let her give it another try in his street legal, green 1960 Austin Mini. It wasn't long before she was fully-committed and purchased the car from her brother and turning it from a street car into a racecar.

According to Don, having the entire family behind the wheels of three vintage racers is not only great fun, it has brought them all closer together. Dennis drops by the shop a couple of times a week to work on the racers with his Dad and Julie makes the trip from the bay area to Nevada City every couple of weeks to visit and work on her racer. She has even said that she will only participate in certain events if the three of them go as a family. Don says that because of their racing classic Minis, the family has become much stronger and nicer to each other.

Of course, the big question is how well does the trio do out there? According to Don they competed in about 10 events last year. He points out that the Monty, when driven by Dennis is faster than the yellow Mini, but Don points out that Dennis started out by racing a very well-prepared raced car 25 years in the making. Julie has driven the yellow and green Minis in a few events and has been showing consistent improvement everytime she's on the track. As for winning... well, Don points out that in vintage racing, just finishing is winning.

As for mods, Don points out that the cars are supposed to be vintage racers. Even so, he admits that all three Minis have 1275cc motors, all have close ratio gearboxes, all have limited slips, and all run 10-inch Hoosier tires, etc. Nothing special in the world of Mini racers, but they all have been prepped for racing. He says that his red Monty Mini and the Green Mini both have pretty close to complete interiors with carpets, and so on. The Yellow Bumblebee Mini is as raced in the 60's and is completely gutted of its interior, looking more like a racecar than the other two, even if it doesn't go quite as fast. Keep up with Don at www.minimania.com. **MC**

