

Cars and stars festival expected to be 'legendary'

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BRAMPTON - Stars and cars will rock and roll into downtown Brampton July 16 to 18 for the 10th anniversary edition of the Classic Cars and Legendary Stars Festival.

The event, which was named one of the top 100 festivals in the province by the prestigious Festivals&Events Ontario, celebrates legends of the past such as Elvis, Frank Sinatra and Patsy Cline with top-notch impersonators and brings in a cluster of classic cars to heighten the ambiance of the "old days".

Started as a small grass roots festival hosted by the Brampton Downtown Development Corporation, the free event has evolved into a booming festival that draws out more than 20,000 people over the course of its three days.

This year, to mark the 10th anniversary, event organizers will bring in a headline artist to perform on Saturday night.

"The big thing we have for the first time is a real headline artist- Lighthouse," explained David Harmsworth, event committee chair. "They were one of the benchmark Canadian bands from the '60s and '70s."

Also new this year (courtesy of Canadian Tire stores) is a special Kids Zone in Ken Whillans Square on Saturday with remote control cars, video simulators, bouncy castles and more, making the event more family friendly than ever. Also at the Square on Saturday is a market place featuring unique wares by artisans and crafters.

The 25,000 people expected to attend this weekend will enjoy many of the same perennial features that keep visitors coming back each year, such as the Classic Cars Parade sponsored by RONA. Rolling out from Guest Street, the oldies vehicles will head west to Main Street, turn north past Gage Park and fill the Four Corners in downtown Brampton. The annual Show and Shine runs until 5 p.m., and classic cars of the past will line the streets.

To add to the amazing sounds of stars from the past, Oldies 1150 AM radio will pump out the tunes to keep the sound of nostalgia streaming out into the streets.

What makes the event so successful, considered Harmsworth, is the opportunity to reminisce with all the great features of the "old days".

"People love nostalgia," he said. "It takes them back to a time when they were young."

And of course, entertainment will be better than ever at the Rose Stage at Gage beginning Thursday evening and running through to Saturday afternoon.

Some of the highlights include the Thursday evening kick off with Jeff Sommerville joined Brampton's own The Jazz Mechanics, with a tribute to Frank Sinatra.

Friday the festivities continue from 6 p.m. to midnight with Organized Funk Chaos, Uptown Girls, Freddy Vette&The Flames, and Brampton native Terry Chisholm in his Elvis tribute, Memories of the King.

"It's the first time we're featuring Terry with his big show, with singers and dancers and horns," said Harmsworth.

It all continues Saturday, with tributes to the Beatles, Billy Joel, Chicago and more, with the grand finale performance by Lighthouse.

"We get a great crowd every year. This is the most fun event for downtown Brampton, for sure," said Harmsworth, who has been involved since the festival's inception. "It's just a great combination of things. If you have all the right ingredients- great music, food, drink- it's just a great time for everyone."

For more details on the Classic Cars and Legendary Stars Festival, visit www.bramptondowntown.com.