

The Stormin' Van Ormans' Make Racing Twice The Fun

A Special Feature Article By: Jennifer Lee

For all you "regulars" out there, the name "Van Orman" must be quite familiar. That's because Gene and Ken Van Orman have been racing with the SCCA for almost a decade. Gene's son Ken started racing in mid-year of 1991 with Gene following about 6 months later. What sparked Ken's interest in racing was his love of cars and information about the autocrosses from his dad, Gene. Ken began racing with a 1991 Civic SI, switching cars several times until settling on his current ride, a BMW M3. Gene had raced a 1991 Nissan Sentra up to about 6 months ago when he decided to race a Volkswagen Jetta. Between all these car transformations, Ken sort of lost his interest in autocrossing thus selling his Civic and taking up other hobbies along with school. When he returned to the world of racing approximately a year ago, seeing that his dad was having such a blast, Ken brought out a Mazda 323 GTX to compete with.



Gene and Ken Van Orman

Gene says that there's not much competition between him and his son because Ken is a better driver. This could be because Ken is more of the technician and has more knowledge of cars than Gene does. Nevertheless, they have fun comparing times with each other and so forth. According to Ken the best part of racing is the excitement of being out on the track and having no "legal" limits to worry about. Gene likes the competition and racing gives him a break from worries and stress. The pressure is trying to get his best time within the 4 allotted runs. Being a "good" driver requires concentration and the ability to control your aggression, says Gene. Similarly, Ken tells me sensitivity to your car's handling, being aggressive, having the appropriate mood and being able to do your best with only 4 runs is the key to being a "good" driver.

As for now, Ken's BMW is pretty much stock with an aftermarket computer chip, and good suspension. Racing tires are next on his list of upgrades. Gene races his current Jetta in the CSP class. Gene's greatest racing achievement was winning the 1993-94 Championship run-off against Amy Lee. This is because, "Amy's so consistent" says Gene. On the other hand, Ken has nothing he considers an achievement in racing yet, but is looking for big improvements with his upcoming race tires. Overall, they just want to keep having fun.