

Cruise Night

Wednesday Night, Van Nuys Boulevard



For anyone who lived in southern California in the 1950's or 1960's it's no secret that the worlds largest and most packed cruise strip was Van Nuys Blvd. in Van Nuys California.

Imagine about seven miles of ultra wide boulevard joined with every conceivable kind of cool car imaginable parading back and forth. The parking spaces that lined the street, packed with hot rods, customs, street machines and muscle cars. Every conceivable parking space filled with kids and their cars. The neighborhoods adjacent to the boulevard were bound with the heavy traffic of kids circling around to rejoin the cruise.

It's also no secret that most of this traffic had a destination, which was to the world's largest cruise night location the Van Nuys Bob's Drive-In. The fact is that all the Bob's Drive-ins that I worked at were popular as a cruise night location.

When I was in High School we cruised the loop. The loop was a series of streets that would lead us around to all the best local cruise spots. This could take six or seven hours depending on how big we made the loop. We would cruise A&W Root Beer Drive-in, Oscars, Roberts, Tiny Naylor's, Clock's, The Witch Stand. The largest and most lavish drive-in of all The Van de Kamp's Twin Drive-In and Restaurant/ Coffee Shop and Bakery which was not really a cruise night location but it was by far the most spectacular with about eight million miles of blue neon all over everything including the huge wind-mill that rotated above the place. Well we just had to cruise her.

We cruised The San Fernando Bob's, the Toluca Lake Bob's, the Glendale Bob's and of coarse the one Bob's we would cruise twice the Van Nuys Bob's. It's not easy being a kid, so we gave it are best shot. What I wanted to conjure here was not Bob's Van Nuys in particular, but cruise nights in general.

Many of the scenes in Corvette Summer were Filmed On Van Nuys Blvd. By the time the 1970's rolled around the boulevard had reached its zenith. Paralyzing the city's business district and neighborhoods with gridlock, vandals, noise and kids. The Los Angeles City Council finally heeded the please of local business people and the police, and the crackdown on cruising began.

By the mid-1980's Crusin' Van Nuys was just a pleasant memory.