

Pretty. Fast. Ladies

Rocky Mountain Region's Women's Day

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Pretty. Fast. Women

CELEBRATING PCA'S LARGEST LADIES-ONLY DRIVER EDUCATION DAY.

STORY BY **TARA HURLIN**
PHOTOS BY **SEAN CRIDLAND & THE AUTHOR**

THE SOUND OF squealing tires punctuated the noise of engines. I turned around just in time to see a bright yellow Subaru BRZ spin off the track. The sidelines erupted with clapping and bursts of animated *woo-hoos* and *yeahs*. That's when I knew I had come to the right place: Rocky Mountain Region's annual Ladies' Day, where every year a pack of beauties wrangle up their beasts—and by beasts I mean cars—for a special day at the track.

It was August 10, 2019, and the sun was just rising over the mesa when we arrived at the Colorado State Patrol driving track in Golden. Streams of deep creamsicle-orange mixed with a purple glow

pierced through the clouds as they separated, allowing the sun to warm the pavement of the curvy, 1.4-mile course. The track was built on top of South Table Mountain in 1972 as the Colorado State Patrol Academy's space to educate their cadets about vehicle dynamics and performance driving. This track has also spurred the Ladies' Day running joke, "Ma'am, do you know how fast you were going?"

One thing is for certain, the Ladies' Day track event is the ticket to experiencing what it is like to be on a racetrack. The straightforward layout is perfect for drivers who are just starting to get their grip on the wheel, and the running groups are

organized to match each driver's skills, from beginner to pro.

Ladies' Day dates back to 1998, when a group of women who were participating in driver's education (DE) events at the now-defunct Second Creek Raceway in Denver realized that not nearly enough women were involved. Together, they concluded that more women should have the opportunity to experience the satisfaction that comes from excelling at high-performance driving. After that conversation, the Rocky Mountain Region's Ladies' Day was born. The first year brought ten registrants, and the numbers have risen with each passing year.

Over the past 21 years, the event





has taken place at three different Colorado racetracks, and since moving to the current location in Golden, it has continued to grow. Organizers suspect that this is due to the track's close proximity to the Denver metro area, which isn't too far from home for most participants. And, I must say, the mountainside that rises behind the course made a perfect backdrop for the laid-back atmosphere.

This year's event saw record attendance. Seventy-seven women registered, which was seven more than planned, and 41 of the 77 were taking their very first spin around a closed course. Lynda Love, the co-chair for this year's Ladies' Day DE, reports that it is the largest women-

only track event in all of PCA. In fact, she stated, it might even be the largest track event run by women, for women, in all of motorsports.

IT'S IMPORTANT TO NOTE that RMR's Ladies' Day is not a Porsche-only event. It is open to all women (including non-PCA members) and all makes of cars, with one exception: SUVs do need to be German manufactured.

By the time lunch rolled around, the folks watching from the sidelines were itching for a ride. They were in luck: a charity run allowed friends and family to hitch a ride around the course in exchange for a \$20 donation toward the Colorado State Patrol Family Foundation, a

nonprofit that supports families of fallen state troopers.

The smiles emanating from behind each driver's helmet after their sessions proved the truth behind long-time PCA club racer Kathy Fricke's words: "We do not set the bar so high that our ladies feel intimidated. They attend this event because every gal knows we will not put them under any undue pressure." By day's end, a noticeable improvement was seen in the first-timers. It's incredible what can be learned in 25-minute low-key sessions. Even when a car spun off the course, loud cheers of encouragement erupted from the sidelines, because it's impossible to determine your car's limits without

exceeding them. When the day was done, there were high-fives and hugs all around.

Dr. Lisa Hunsicker is a long-time Ladies' Day participant and a competitive PCA Club Racing driver who competes in events across the country. She first discovered her passion for racing in 2012, and by 2014 was qualified to compete in Club Racing. Today, Lisa owns her own business, Rocky Mountain Racing Group, and pilots a 320-hp 3.4-liter Porsche Cayman. "I love racing, but what I love most about it is the people," she expressed. "Everyone helps each other, even when in competition. If someone's car breaks, other racers help to get them back on the track."

Above left: Drivers line up for a guided session. **Above:** Adele Arakawa signals to officials before hitting the track. **Below left:** Lisa Bryan adjusts tire pressure for optimal traction. **Below:** Lisa Hunsicker demonstrates lightning-fast speeds.





From first-time track drivers to experienced competitors, the PCA Rocky Mountain Region Ladies' Day is a place where women can hone their driving skills, build confidence, and form life-long friendships.

As a driver education program, the goal for Ladies' Day is to teach vehicle dynamics and help hone skills for safe driving on the street. Regardless of whether every participant gets hooked on performance driving, each of them drives away with new vehicle handling skills that they can utilize on public roads. "My hope is that some [ladies] will come to more Rocky Mountain driving education events at High Plains Raceway, and possibly pursue a passion for PCA Club Racing," stated Vicki Earnshaw, past PCA Club Racing chair.

An event of this scale couldn't be done without volunteers. The Ladies' Day driving instructors come

from all walks of life, but one thing they have in common is a passion for racing. This year, 31 dedicated instructors signed up to teach. Many of the female instructors who belong to RMR also instruct at Ladies' Day, and every one of them is a role model for aspiring women racers. Let's not forget that Ladies' Day would not be a success without the support of RMR's male instructors and volunteers. Their friendliness, enthusiasm, and knowledge at the track are irreplaceable. Most instructors, no matter their gender, say that Ladies' Day is their favorite event to attend and instruct, while the participants, no matter their skill level, say it is their favorite day to drive. ●

For information on the 2020 Ladies' Day, visit rmr.pca.org

