


**DEEP DIVE**

# The fast life

**WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THESE MANY SUPERCARS GATHER FOR A DAY OUT? A FESTIVAL THAT COMPRISES MANY WET DREAMS**

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**O**nce upon a time, many Sundays ago, I remember answering a phone call from Peter Chacko. It was simple. He had managed to get together some of the cars he had tuned, for a drive and invited me to tag along, maybe even drive a couple of them on one of 'Pete's Super Sunday' drives. In the line-up at the time, were a couple of Skoda Octavias/Lauras, a Chevrolet Cruze, a BMW 3-Series and a couple of SUVs, which included a Thar. The Skodas were certainly favourites for Peter and he had managed to turn a couple of them into rather ludicrous monsters churning out close to 500 horsepower. But, that's a story for another time.

For now, we fast forward several years to what has become, arguably, India's best performance car show. And in its fourth edition, it is a lot more

than just a Sunday drive. Welcome to the Pete's Festival of Speed. And just like the original, there is still a 'super Sunday' drive with cars that have been to his garage at some point in their lives, for upgrades ranging from lightweight wheels to exhaust systems to re-tuned engines and suspension work. This year, I took up Peter on his offer and got high on a trail of fumes that only a squad of forty-odd supercars can leave behind. With a police escort ensuring the roads were cordoned off for supercar traffic, in the wee hours of the morning, I hitched a ride to get ahead and possibly click some pictures of the convoy. It remained too dark to shoot in the hills of Idukki, but that allowed me to soak in the sounds of everything that passed me by. From the scream of V10s, to the rumble of V8s, to the baritone of V6s

and indeed the smooth rasp of in-line fours. They all arrived, braked hard and left the corner in a glorious cloud of tyre squeal and exhaust pops. On the flip-side, the utilitarian ride I had picked for transport never saw them again on the 100 kilometre drive to the actual show.

Rolling into the convention centre, next to Cochin airport, I finally got a sense of the scale of the Festival of Speed. Not only did the entourage of supercars that passed us by in the morning, number at close to fifty, but there were twice as many superbikes that had been neatly arranged at the grounds. There was even a go-kart track, a motocross track with a couple of ramps for freestyle riders and an autocross track. If a couple of laps in the dirt was enough for you, you could walk across to the main hall and drool over a





host of Lamborghinis, R8s, Mustangs, AMGs and Porsches. And, unlike the Sunday drives from years ago, Peter's friends with motorcycles did not want to be left out. The result, every possible superbike that is available on the market turned up and there was more than one of every sort. In fact, three Kawasaki Ninja H2s were also present and I haven't seen that many even at the quarter-mile strip for the Valley Run races.

Needless to say, my jaw properly dropped to the floor and it was incredible to see the sort of crowds that poured in through the gates for an exhibition of this sort. The thing with supercars is that not only do they tug at the heartstrings of a petrolhead but their sheer presence and beauty ensure it is a family affair. The children stop blinking momentarily and the women cannot



stop gawking while the ones who have posters of these cars plastered on their bedroom walls need to keep wiping the drool off their chins. Every cell phone camera went into overdrive to a point where they would need a break to cool down and a battery pack to fire back up. For a bit of icing on the cake, the owners of these cars completely understand the joy that their machines bring and would promptly fire up the many cylinders to bark out notes that could drown out the drone from a hall crowded full of enthusiasts. It is only fitting that India's best known tuner has put together what can only be described as India's best performance car show. If you haven't been to one of these yet, well, you need to keep your eyes peeled and make a trip down to Cochin for this spectacular annual event. **VB**