

Another Great Race Season

by Bruce Ackerman

The things little boys (and a few girls) do for play ! I've had a great time this summer traveling around California with my P1800. At Infineon raceway (formerly Sears Point), we won both the national and regional in one weekend. At Laguna Seca, we won both the regionals (but not the national) one weekend, and went two-for-two another weekend. As we go to press, the 2003 championship is in sight!

"Race to Recycle" is the theme of these events. They have oil recycling barrels at the track, which is a good thing, and it certainly raises awareness.



It was extremely hot at the track this summer, especially Laguna Seca in June, but once again we showed what a Volvo can do pushed to its limits under extreme conditions. Because of my car's lighter weight and nimble handling, this racer is right up there with cars in much faster classes equipped with V8 engines!



PHOTO: MAILE ACKERMAN

Bruce on his victory lap at Laguna Seca. Photo by Maile Ackerman, Bruce's sister and a founding member of his cheering section!

ACKERMAN'S TURNS TWENTY

It was the summer of 1983 when an auto mechanic struck out on his own and opened the doors of a unique, Volvo-only shop on San Pablo and Allston in West Berkeley.

Since then, Bruce Ackerman and his talented team — including Master ASE-certified technicians Eric (since 1993) and Adam (since 1995) — have worked on thousands of cars every year, benefiting the safety and comfort of drivers and families all around the East Bay. The shop has also contributed in many ways to a wide range of community organizations.

Asked to reflect on Ackerman's 20th anniversary, Bruce said, "Business success is one thing and I've been very fortunate in this way, but you know it's so much about the relationships that have been built over the years. Today one of my long time customers came by for a service and shared with me it that might be the last time we see each other. This is a guy who has been so encouraging of my support of the Berkeley public schools, and he recently got me involved in supporting the Berkeley Boosters. His health is very precarious but he's going at it with such gusto. If only I could fix him as easily as his Volvo."

Featured Customer

Charles L. Robinson



PHOTO: JANE SCHERR

A hallmark of the Ackerman's experience is the welcome that customers feel, no matter who they are or how well they understand their Volvos. Many of Bruce's customers check their own oil and leave just about everything else to Eric and Adam.

These Volvo owners are relieved to know that they don't have to worry about getting scammed or ridiculed when they hand over the keys and say, "take a look at it and tell me what it needs."

Yet Ackerman's loyal customer base also includes a number of individuals who are perfectly capable of working on their own cars.

When they approach the limit of their skills, time and patience, these Volvo drivers come from all over the East Bay to bring their cars to Bruce because they know they'll getting excellent, honest service from people who share their passion for Volvos and will take the time to talk with them about their cars.

Charles L. Robinson of Berkeley is part of the latter group of Ackerman's customers. "I've done plenty of shadetree," Charles comments, "and I still like to work on my car from time to time. But I bring our Volvos to Bruce because I know I can trust him and the guys he hires." Charles has been bringing his 1991 240 and his wife, Sarah's, 1999 S70 to Bruce since the late '90s.

He heard about Ackerman's from a trusted friend, and immediately liked what he saw.

As a forty-one-year resident of Berkeley, Charles has seen a lot of small businesses come and go, and he's proud that Ackerman's has been going strong on San Pablo and Allston for two decades now. Charles says, "I like to go to a business like the one Bruce runs. I remember one time there was a little miscommunication between me and Bruce, and the guys did a small repair that I hadn't authorized. When I spoke to Bruce about it, he apologized, and offered to eat the cost. But I didn't like how that would feel between us, so I offered to meet him halfway. That's what

we did, and that's why I go to

Ackerman's and recommend Bruce and his team to my friends."

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Both Charles and Sarah are retired after long and productive careers, including — many years ago — Charles' stint as the staff photographer for the

Monterey Jazz Festival. He has taken the leap into digital printing of

his extensive film archive of jazz greats. Both members of this couple are highly active in community service. "We do some projects together, and we each also do our own thing," Charles reports. One of their joint efforts involves serving as volunteer ombudsmen at several local skilled nursing and assisted living facilities.

Between them, Sarah and Charles have five children, "all grown, with lives of their own, and good professional jobs." True to Berkeley form, however, the children have rebelled against the parents: only one of them drives a Volvo!

Welcome to Ackerman's, Adrian!

Adrian Villaseñor has joined the Ackerman's team as the shop helper. A mutual friend of Adrian and Bruce told Adrian about the job opening in early August, less than a week after the previous shop helper left to become a carpenter. Bruce says, "What luck! I'm glad Adrian showed up and was able to start work so quickly." Adrian says, "I'm here because I'm looking for experience in the business side of auto repair. I'm impressed by the knowledge that Bruce, Adam and Eric have, and by the compliments that customers have for Ackerman's. It's good to learn from people like Bruce who've been in business a long time. It times a lot to keep a business going like he has."

The duties of the shop helper include office management and marketing support. Adrian says, "When I got here, the office was very organized and running smoothly, so I didn't need to make a lot of changes there. Where I hope to see some new activity is in marketing. We could be doing so much more than we do. So I'm starting to work with Bruce on a number of marketing projects."

Adrian also says that he's enjoying getting to know the customers. "You tell people about your plans," he observes, "and you get lots of feedback and support. Lots of doors open." We're certainly glad that Adrian walked through Ackerman's door, and that he will be there to greet you on your next visit.

Servicing Volvos...Serving the Community

Since 1999, every Ackerman's customer has had the option of choosing a school or nonprofit organization to receive a check for 5% of your bill. **In the first six months of this year, customers have directed almost \$5000 to local organizations, independent schools, and public schools.** The schools and organizations customers chose to support in the first six months of 2003 are listed below. Those which recently received their first donation from the program are **bolded**.

- Albany Middle School
- **Alameda Cty Court Advocates**
- Archway School
- Arrowsmith Academy
- Athenian High School
- Aurora School
- **Beacon Day School**
- Bentley School
- **Berkeley Arts Magnet School**
- Berkeley Boosters
- **Berkeley High School**
- **Berkeley High School ASAP**
- Berkeley High School Development Fund
- Berkeley Hills Nursery School
- **Berkeley Humane Society**
- Berkeley Montessori
- Berkeley Public Education Foundation
- Berkeley Richmond Jewish Community Center
- Berkeley Zen Center
- Berkwood Hedge School
- **Bethel Nursery School**
- Black Pine Circle
- Boy Scouts of America
- Cal State Music Department
- **Center for AIDS Services**
- Children's Community Center
- **Congregation Beth Israel**
- Creative Playcenter
- Disability Education and Defense Fund
- Discovery Center School
- East Bay French American School
- East Bay Waldorf School
- Emerson School
- Friends of the Golden Gate Library
- Hillcrest School
- Homeless Action Center
- Jefferson PTA
- **Laurel Elementary School**
- Le Conte Elementary School
- Malcolm X Elementary PTA
- Marin Elementary School
- Mustard Seed Preschool
- Oakland Hebrew Day School
- Park Day School
- Piedmont Unified School District
- **Pine Valley Middle School**
- Prospect Sierra School
- Redwood Day School
- **Richmond Rescue Mission**
- Rosa Parks Academy
- **Saint Mary's High School**
- Shelton School
- **Saint Jerome School**
- Snugery
- Step One School
- Tehiyah Day School
- Thousand Oaks School PTA
- Valley View Elementary Parents Club
- Willard Middle School
- Windrush School

If you have any questions about the program or want help promoting it at your school or organization, call Ackerman's at 510.549.9330.
Thanks!



A Certified Green Business

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Bruce Ackerman, Owner

Jessica Bucciarelli, Newsletter Editor/Designer



New Art @ Ackerman's

Photography by customer Tim Wickens is now on display in the customer area at Ackerman's. If you like the dune and river images reproduced here, just wait 'til you stop by the shop and see one Tim's Yosemite photos full-size, framed and in color!

Tim writes:

"I've always enjoyed the art Bruce displays and been impressed by how he supports local artists. I was flattered to have one of my pieces join his collection. And compared to most greasy-fingerprint auto shops, the presentation of Bruce's office says a lot to me about the care he and his employees take with automotive work.

Since I first brought my 1966 122S wagon to Bruce in 1988 after it broke down on the Bay Bridge, Bruce has always been there when I needed help. Between our mutual interests in art and Volvos, among other things, I've long felt an affinity for Bruce and have felt glad to see his business grow and prosper."

Visit www.timwickens.com for more samples of Tim's work and information about the artist.



VISIT OUR NEWLY IMPROVED WEBSITE: www.AckermanServicingVolvo.com