

SURVIVOR®

Worn in, but not worn out.®

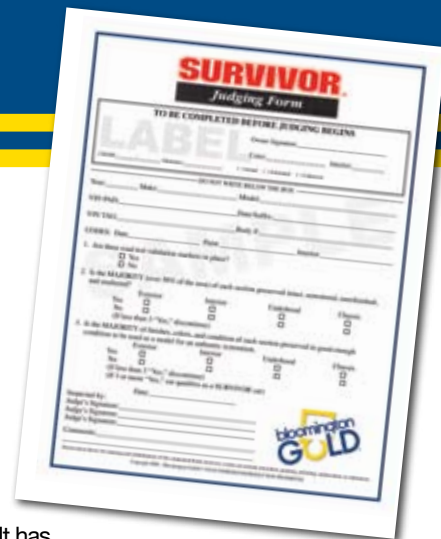
By David Burroughs

In our last issue, we described the Bloomington Gold flagship event, Gold Certification. This article will expand upon the two other very popular and growing judging events, specifically SURVIVOR® and BENCHMARK®. These events feature unrestored original cars. SURVIVOR level means generally unrestored. However, there may be some degree of deterioration existing that may prevent it from also qualifying for a Gold Certificate. BENCHMARK cars are not only unrestored originals, but also capable of being Gold Certified. BENCHMARK cars are original cars that still look like they are nearly brand new. Obviously, this becomes geometrically more difficult to achieve as the cars become older and older. It clearly makes a statement about the collectability and desirability of any car with this certification from Bloomington Gold.

Why was SURVIVOR created?

Back in the 1980's, owners brought very nice unrestored original cars to Bloomington Gold to become Gold Certified. Naturally, many of them had some road wear and mild deterioration from normal use. They still looked great but were in somewhat less than factory new appearance. Instead of scoring in the 95-100% range required for a Gold Certificate, they would often score more in the 90-94% range and receive a Silver Certificate. Disappointed, owners would typically return the next year with the same car restored to "shiny new" and get their Gold Certificate. However, they had also unwittingly just destroyed much of the car's historic markings—not to mention erasing much of the car's credibility along with it. To help mitigate this problem, David Burroughs, who created Gold Certification in 1978, created the standards and process for judging original unrestored Corvettes in 1989. Bloomington Gold then immediately registered SURVIVOR® as the trademark for *Authenticating Certain Collectible Automobiles*. SURVIVOR judging began in 1990.

Now, after nearly 20 years, Bloomington Gold has SURVIVOR Certified® nearly 1,000 Corvettes, and the awareness of SURVIVOR is enormous. Further, it has paid four big dividends to the Corvette collector car community.



1. It has caused owners to think twice before "improving" cars that are historically preserved but may be less than cosmetically perfect.
2. It has provided collectors, owners, and restorers the chance to see and understand the characteristic "look" of nearly 100 true originals every year at Bloomington Gold.
3. It has helped restorers document how to more accurately restore cars that have deteriorated beyond SURVIVOR capability.
4. It has added some new excitement to typical car shows.

What's it take to be SURVIVOR Certified?

A panel of Certified SURVIVOR Judges inspects and certifies that the car meets these standards:

1. It must be at least 20 years old.





2. It must complete a 20+ miles road test within one hour
3. It must remain over 50% unrestored, un-refinished, and unaltered from the way it left the factory in at least three of the four areas:

- Exterior (Paint, Trim, Glass)
- Interior / Trunk
- Under Hood
- Chassis (Suspension, Frame, Wheels)

4. It must remain with over 50% of the original finishes (paint, fabrics, plating) accurate enough to be used as color references for restoration of a car just like it. NOTE: If more than 50% of the color is obscured, re-finished, or missing, it cannot be considered accurate.

What do our Judges Inspect on SURVIVOR?

Exterior: This includes *everything* visible with the doors, hood, and trunk closed (body, exterior paint, trim, chrome, glass, etc., but *not* wheels, covers, or tires). Judges inspect the entire exterior as ONE component and determine if “the total” remains over 50% un-restored, un-refinished, or unaltered.

Interior: This includes *everything* visible in the cabin and trunk including jamba (carpet, headliner, seats, dash, controls, trim, etc., but *not* windows). Judges inspect the entire interior as ONE component and determine if “the total” remains over 50% un-restored, un-recovered, un-refinished or unaltered.

Under Hood: This includes *everything* visible in the engine compartment (engine, visible frame/suspension, firewall, fender wells, underside of hood, accessories, hoses, wiring, fasteners, etc.). Judges inspect the entire under hood area as ONE component and determine if “the total” remains over 50% un-restored, un-refinished, or unaltered.



Chassis: This includes *everything* visible attached to and including the frame, wheels, tires, and covers, but does *not* include the part of the frame/suspension visible from under hood. Judges inspect the entire chassis as ONE component and determine if “the total” remains over 50% un-restored, un-recovered, or unaltered.

Common Mistakes:

Unfortunately, we have seen beautiful unrestored low mileage originals whose owners couldn't resist “touching up” the paint on some of the factory original components like the engine block, water pump, valve covers, accessories, radiator, shroud, and surrounding surfaces. Then in order for the suspension and chassis not to look less than perfect, the owner “touches them up” as well. By doing so, the historic fingerprints of both the Under Hood and Chassis have been unwittingly removed and thereby the car can never again pass at least 3 of the 4 areas required to be SURVIVOR Certified. One more has been forever lost from history, and no amount of money can bring back those fingerprints or status as SURVIVOR. (Adding insult to injury; everyone else's unrestored originals have now become just a little more rare....)

C&C



For more details, go to www.SurvivorCarShow.com and learn how Bloomington Gold has now expanded SURVIVOR beyond Corvette. And be sure to read David Burroughs' educational brochure, “Restore it? Or not!”