

DER PORSCHE BRIEF

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Monticello Karting & Motor Club

By Jeff Bartlett

On a beautiful Sunday afternoon Charles Johnson and I, piled into the car and went in search of real racing action reportedly to be found just outside Monticello. We weren't disappointed. Heading east on Highway 90 about four miles outside of Monticello is Big Jim Road. Take a right (just follow the signs to the Corrections Facility and you can't go wrong if you haven't already), and about a mile down the road is the Monticello Karting & Motor Club.

This is a world class Karting facility with a paved asphalt track, pit and paddock areas, sales, and rentals of karts, parts, and gear. The track is constructed to support the weight of a full size car though its 19 foot width would make for some very tight passing. The track has several configurations ranging from a 0.4-mile short (training) circuit to a 1.1-mile long course complete with elevation change and at least three hairpin turns.

For \$35.00 per person the track offers a drivers school, for first time karters, that includes classroom sessions and 20 laps of short course track time. After training, you can get 20 laps on the short course for \$25.00 and 10 laps on the long course for \$35.00. The entire facility can be rented when not in use for a race weekend and memberships are available.

You say you don't have a kart. Not to worry, the track has several rental karts that include fire suit, gloves, and helmet. Known as E-Z Karts, they are the most popular karts being run in the area. The E-Z Kart is a simple machine, comprised of a welded tube type frame, no suspension and rear axle mounted brakes. The engine is a sealed 28 hp with electric start and can produce speeds in excess of 75mph. The bodywork, such that it is, is made of molded ABS plastic held in place by springs. This makes these karts easy to work on, simple to maintain, and inexpensive to operate. A new kart can be raced for between \$4000.00 and \$6000.00, depending on extras you might need and is small enough to fit in the bed of a standard Pickup.

Coming up in September the Monticello Karting & Motor Club will host the E-Z Kart Nationals. You can see the action from on the front side of the course, at no cost, or for \$10.00, you can get a pit pass and mingle with the racers. Just like at Daytona or Sebring, except the vehicles are a lot smaller and a large number of the drivers are too young to have a driver's license. Information about the track and schedule can be found at www.monticellokarting.com, or by calling the track at 850-510-4188.

Are they Porsches? Well not exactly. But, they should be fun.

NORTH FLORIDA REGION
PORSCHE CLUB OF AMERICA



Performance Oriented Driving Instruction: What Are the Options?

By Barry A. Waters

I'm periodically asked what my experience has been with Performance Oriented Driving Instruction so I thought I'd write a short article on the subject. Today there are more opportunities than ever for you to obtain this type of driving instruction and it is becoming a healthy industry for those that are providing the training. So where to start?

It's probably best to first understand why you might seek such instruction in the first place. Most folks do it out of a desire to learn more about the finer points of driving their 'performance' automobile (be it a Camaro or a Carrera GT) at speed. Conquering a demanding section of an Autocross or racing track is something magical and all the while feeling the suspension compress and knowing exactly what the car is doing and why. The very practical side is that you *definitely* become a better driver, one much more capable of handling emergencies in day to day traffic.

If any of the above sounds interesting to you then congratulations, you're a perfect candidate for advanced instruction! The only issue is where to begin and a great place is with an enthusiast club like PCA or SCCA that runs an Autocross program.

These programs assist your learning experience by placing you in your own car on a scaled-down road race track outlined by rubber traffic cones and having you make repeated runs as you learn the course and strive for your best personal time. The speeds usually don't exceed 60 MPH and the driving time is usually about 1 minute and change per run with a typical event giving you 5 to 6 runs on the course.

Since you run completely by yourself you have no worries about traffic and are free to concentrate solely on moving the car through the course in the fastest manner possible. You will slide, hit cones and possibly spin but you'll be doing so in a safe environment, one specifically designed for those eventualities. So while your tires may not speak to you for a few days afterwards, the rest of your car should be pretty neutral about the whole affair.

Just be sure to leave any ego you may have at home so you can laugh it off when the 17 year old kid in the Focus easily comes in under your best time by a good 12 seconds! Like any other sport, competitive and very capable participants are always present at these affairs!

It's my opinion that Autocross serves as a great introduction to performance driving but, while club members will be most happy to lend advice and provide a little coaching, most Autocross programs are more of an individual effort from the driver's standpoint so it helps to come prepared. My advice? Read-up! The 'Secrets Of Solo Racing' by Henry A. Watts is a standard in the Autocross arena and will prepare you exceptionally well for your first Autocross. It's also usually in stock at the larger bookstores.

The next step on my list would be a true course of instruction such as those provided by the automobile manufacturers themselves and professional driver training schools – a High Performance Driving School. The only downside is that unlike Autocross, where a day's adventure begins with a \$20-\$40 entry fee, professional instruction is going to move you into the hundreds if not thousands of dollars range!

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If you're still with me after *that* realization, there are some great benefits to be had for all of that money! First of all, most schools provide the car you'll be driving so you'll have no worries about your own vehicle doing double duty. You'll also get a very professional and personalized level of instruction with about a 20/80 split between classroom and track time. Track time? Yes – in most cases these schools are held on actual race tracks! Another benefit is more 'seat-time' than you'll find at an Autocross event – a lot more!

Your choice between a one day, two day or three day school will obviously impact how much you'll experience but, regardless of the schools length, your instruction will delve into the true 'science' behind handling and performance. You'll soon be using terms like apex, understeer, oversteer, suspension compression, loading, trailing throttle and trailing brake as if you were Juan Manuel Fangio! You'll not only understand the words but you'll actually experience, control and invoke them. In short, be ready to have your vocabulary expanded and the secrets of the art of driving revealed!

Most schools will start with about an hour of classroom instruction in the morning (and possibly after lunch) and then progress to exercises where they build your skills in segments that will be linked together to finally give you full run of the track at some point. In most cases you will be in a group of four to six student cars with an instructor in his or her car. You usually stay with this group throughout the course. Passing is usually not part of the program (except under instructor control) as the 'lead/follow' approach is the mainstay of many of the schools.

During the course your group's instructor will ride with you, you will ride with him, you'll follow him on the track and he will follow you. This allows you to learn by example and to also receive immediate input on what you're doing right and on what you may need to work on! This is a very good thing as, unlike most Autocross events, speeds in this type of school can approach true racing speeds (in excess of 100 MPH) as the instruction progresses.

The instructors themselves are tops in their field and in many cases regularly compete in national racing series. It's not at all uncommon to turn on Speed to watch a Grand AM or ALMS race and spot your instructor driving for one of the professional teams.

My only suggestion would be to forego the one day courses and save the additional money needed to spring for a two day course if at all possible. A one day course may whet your appetite so thoroughly that you'll only start kicking yourself immediately afterwards for not scheduling a two day school instead!

After participating in one (or both!) of these wonderful methods of coming to grips with your performance driving desires the next step may be actual racing instruction. There are many excellent options here as well and I'll attempt to shed a little light on that process in a subsequent article. Until then, look for an Autocross or High Performance Driving School opportunity near you. Both have the ability to provide you with tremendous insight on performance driving *and* to place huge smiles on your face!

Region Calendar—JULY/AUG 2007

July

5—6:30 PM, Social at Cuvee Beach and Wine Restaurant, 36120 Emerald Coast Highway, Destin, Florida. Socials are the first Thursday of every month at the Cuvee.

18—6:30 PM, Social at Gill's Tavern, 2545 N. Monroe Street, Tallahassee. Socials are the third Wednesday of every month at Gill's Tavern.

August

2—6:30 PM, Social at Cuvee Beach and Wine Restaurant, 36120 Emerald Coast Highway, Destin, Florida. Socials are the first Thursday of every month at the Cuvee.

15—6:30 PM, Social at Gill's Tavern, 2545 N. Monroe Street, Tallahassee. Socials are the third Wednesday of every month at Gill's Tavern

31 August -3 September—Peach State Region's 39th Annual Rennfest, Young Harris, Georgia, www.peachstatepca.org for details. Vic Elford will speak.

Dates to Save:

16 September—Drive Your 356 Day

2-4 November— Rennsport III, Daytona Beach, www.rennsport2007.com,

13 October—North Florida Region Destin Auto Show

15 December—North Florida Region Holiday Party

Short Tracks

Bob Rasmussen sent an article from the Northwest Florida Daily News reporting that a Porsche dealership will locate in Destin on Main Street near the corner of Airport Road.

Porsche RS Spyder's have taken five overall wins in a row in the American Le Mans Racing Series. These are LMP2 Class cars winning over the larger LMP1 Class cars that are supposed to win the races overall, and not just in class. A Porsche 997 RSR Cup car also won the GT2 Class at the most recent race at the Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course.

Seafood Extravaganza Fun

Forty-one folks attended the Seafood Extravaganza hosted by Evelyn and Tom Vlasak at their home on Ochlocknee Bay. The Vlasak's friend, Becky Mealor, and neighbors, Chuck and Cheryl O'Konski helped with the hosting. Becky had a chance to drive the Cayman brought to the Extravaganza by Bruce Parker from Capital Eurocars in Tallahassee. Capital Eurocars also provided Porsche key holders as door prizes for all attendees. Thank you Capital Eurocars and Bruce. Also a big thank you to Jim Magill for donating the wine and beer. Dave Guindon brought his pontoon boat and gave great tours through the St. Marks Wildlife Refuge. Thanks to Randy and Lori Cook for bringing their Ferrari and dessert and Mindy Waters for her coleslaw.

The oyster shucking station at the end of the dock appeared to be popular. We were extremely blessed with great weather, sun but not too hot and a breeze off the bay that kept the bugs away.

Another highlight was the participation of Gary Kempton, who attended with his Porsche Steel Bodied American Roadster. (See Picture below) A one of a kind car worth well over a million dollars. Gary was presented with a Letter of Appreciation at the Extravaganza for his great support of the North Florida Region. A well deserved award. Thank you Gary for your



support of the Region, attending and showing us your beautiful car.

It was great that Bob and Beverly Rasmussen made it over from Niceville. Several of our newer members came out and several members who we haven't seen in a while were in attendance.

A GREAT EVENT. THANK YOU EVELYN AND TOM.

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