



Der Porsche Brief



NORTH FLORIDA REGION

PORSCHE CLUB OF AMERICA

AUTOBAHN ADVENTURES

The Ultimate European Driving Experience

Story and photos by Garey Cooper (PCA – Orange Coast Region)

[ED. Note—This article originally appeared in the newsletter of the Orange Coast Region and is reprinted here with permission.]

It all began with... It all started at the Porsche Club of America, Orange Coast Region's Christmas Party in December 2006. There was a silent auction (no mimes were harmed) and one of the items was the Autobahn Adventures tour of Germany for 2007....hmmm, what driver didn't ever dream of driving the Autobahn in a Porsche? Hey, I thought; let's take a chance. How far would you go to drive a car on a highway? Of course it's a nice highway but it's a highway nonetheless. All right, it is the AUTOBAHN, famed in story and legend and it is true, there are times and areas where there is NO SPEED LIMIT.

Somewhere across the sea... Fast forward to September 2007 and we are on a jet to Germany, that would be Stuttgart (or Lourdes to the faithful), home of the flat six and the driving passion that is Porsche. In Stuttgart you not only have Porsche but Mercedes Benz, talk about a town with pedigree. With some American pride I might call it the "Detroit of Europe", but for the fact that in the tides of business it seems that Detroit is in thrall to Stuttgart.

Our first stop was at the Kempinski Hotel Neu-Isenburg in Frankfurt. Here we were greeted by Mark and Tina Trewartha of Autobahn Adventures, who would be our hosts for the trip. And in the most exciting preamble, out in the parking lot there was a shiny row of Porsches. Imagine a kid of 12 walking into a candy shop and being



told, "take one, any one" and, well, you get the idea. Escorted by Mark and Tina we each had to choose our new 911 for the next 10 days. Just like Henry Ford said, "take any color you want so long as it's black." In fact, they were all black. We selected a Carrera 4S that was, you guessed it, black!



Our Porsche was outfitted with all the options you could want including a navigation system. Programmed in English it became our

Ventura Highway... The Autobahn system is unique. It was the inspiration for the US Interstate system and was a national highway system that in early conception was meant to mobilize troops to one frontier or another. Only the Romans were better road builders; they got it and so did the Germans in the first half of the twentieth century. While gasoline is expensive there, the taxes go for the infrastructure and sad to say almost any German road is better than its USA counterpart.

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Smoother, better marked, and better engineered. Their allure to the USA-based driver is the open areas that have virtually no speed limits. And I mean NO SPEED LIMITS. We'll give you a moment to let this sink in, yup; put the pedal to the metal and go till she won't go no more. There is a distinctive sign that signals it's time to let the petroleum byproducts loose and fly and that's what people do. You'll see station wagons at 250+ KPH with kids in the back coloring. At the same time you might think you're flying when suddenly in your rear view mirror a Renault wants by you! My advice is to move right on over and let them by. They know the roads and you don't; don't let your "macho" get too loose here. At high speeds, really high speeds, things are different. Be aware and take care is my best advice; increment up to the speeds and be respectful of local knowledge. A fender bender at 250 KPH has a whole new meaning. By the way I was just kidding about the Renault, none of them passed me!

Nurburgring, Green Hell... The Dorint Novotel Am Nurburgring (did I forget to mention that ALL our hotels were five star?) was our next stop. And nearer to "car guy" heaven you can't get. The hotel rooms open right upon the "new ring" and I awoke to the sounds of cars squealing their tires right under our balcony. Just in the distance one could see the fabled North Ring; built in the 20's and the playground of Nuvolari, Rosemyer, Schumacher, Stewart, Clark, etc., etc. The best part of the whole trip was the chance to put a toe into these very same waters! AUTOBAHN ADVENTURES had set us up for one afternoon at the Nurburgring, not in our rental cars (they do have insurance rules in Germany) but in modified BMW's rented from a local race-car-hire company. I had opted to select the BMW 1.8 liter race-prepared car for the day. There were other bigger cars available, but this one had the five-point harness, was stripped and road race prepared. She was all momentum, maybe 180 horses tops, but what a flying shingle. We got her just over 150 KPH on the straight pulling all the way before shutting down, but a more responsive car you wouldn't find.

Now some words about driving on the Nurburgring on track days... everyone runs! That is EVERYONE. You will see minivans filled with families (I did), a little delivery truck with about a 25 horsepower motor and 1" wide tires (I did), and a full blown modified GT-3 driven to the absolute limit (I did), and all on the same lap! Everyone that shows up with a driver's license and the track fee can go out, which is pretty much what everyone does. There are motorcycles roaring around the place with the leather clad riders leaned over so far you wonder how they stay on; sometimes they don't. Now I expect what you would like to hear is that everybody gets along and respects each other and accidents are rare, but that in fact would be untrue. Sadly accidents are NOT RARE and most days the track is shut down and running cars are stopped as some unfortunate is helicoptered out to the hospital. Hospital sounds so right in German: *Krankenhaus*.



The Nurburgring is also long, very difficult to remember and is filled with blind turns. If you imagine a mountain road twisting and turning with dips and depressions, you will have the correct picture. Probably the most photographed turn is the "Carousel". This is an almost, but not quite, 360° banked bowl that really fast cars dip down into, and after traveling around the bowl are flung out with increased momentum like the marble in a roulette wheel. Incredibly all of the turns have names (whoever had the time to go through there and name all of these I don't know). Some of them are self descriptive like: *flug platz*...others obscure and known only by the locals. But in my time on the track it certainly earned its reputation and nickname. You do have to drive with one eye in the rear view mirror as there are incredibly quick cars mixed in with the proletariat. I shared my driving with Steve, a fellow traveler and he and I agreed to act as spotters for one another, which worked out well.



After our day on the track, we retreated to the bar at the hotel. This bar had autographs filling every square inch and all of the patrons were encouraged to add their names to those who had gone before. So the walls are covered with signatures of the famous, near-famous, and infamous, as well as yours truly. After some excellent German beer we were all bragging about how fast we went and I began to make up names for corners and asking people how the others had driven them: "say, Keith how fast did you take Schnigglefritz? Keith Verlaque of San Diego is a fellow PCA member and a driver of note down that way and he gave me a blank stare and said: "where's that corner?" "Oh," I replied, "two kilometers past Bunzenbreaken." Keith didn't recall them so I just said, "I just go flat out and hope for the best!"

(Autobahn Adventures, Continued on next page)

(Autobahn Adventures—continued from prior page.)

But Wait, There's More... You can't stay too long at the Nurburgring in my book, but some people like Mrs. Cooper disagree so we had to leave the next day and generally continued heading south. Each evening the Trewartha's had scheduled stops at beautiful hotels with great gourmet dinners. Days were mostly on our own exploring local roads, or in our case, golf courses. Mrs. Cooper usually travels with her suitcase which we in the family have named the "widow maker". Though she stands just an eyelash over five feet, her suitcase is a little taller than she is. As far as weight is concerned, let's just say I've seen experienced bellmen, and cab drivers turn and run upon first sighting our luggage. So my wife's first challenge was packing enough to wear with a golf bag. I am sure some physics laws were violated along the line but she did manage to accomplish her packing mission. And although my



right arm is now longer than my left arm and I can tie my shoes without bending over, we managed to drag, haul, and cajole all of that gear into our Black Carrera from stop to stop. There were a couple of problems like when I bought a pack of gum and had to take it out of the wrapper to fit it into the car, but most of the time we were fine.

*In Switzerland...*Part of the wonderful itinerary planned by Mark and Tina was the Alpine region of Switzerland around Lake Lucerne. To say this area is beautiful is almost an injustice, it truly is beyond that. The lake itself is spectacular enough but the backdrop over the lakes of those high mountains comes right out of central casting for everything you think should be right about Switzerland. This was one of the occasions where we had a planned daytime outing. We were scheduled to go up the Alpine passes and cross over one to come back down into Lucerne. Armed with our navigation system, walkie-talkies, and maps, our brave little group took off and believe it or not got lost! How with all of that technology did we manage this one might



ask? It seems that there had been some recent road construction in the area and some of the maps had not been updated. The result was near hilarity as one by one, the cars were separated and slowly drifted out of radio range, like an episode of *Lost* (without the commercials). I ended up with one other car, that of our tour leader himself: Mark, who I figured had at least an inkling of where we were headed. So, he and I craftily got ourselves re-routed and finally, near the mountain top, met up with the rest of our party who had beaten us there by about half an hour! We carried on over the pass and the views were breathtaking. It is hard to describe looking out over the mountain flank with the road one long ribbon of asphalt winding down into the valley with towns and ultimately the city of Lucerne lying far below. Not a place for the faint of heart or those who get car sick easily.

While in Lucerne Mrs. Cooper and I had our other "navigation incident". We were looking for the Lucerne golf club and had duly programmed the address into our system. It got us right to the smallest road you ever saw and said: "take the road." So, take the road we did which went straight up the hill and grew ever narrower the further we got. Ultimately we began to lose confidence as I realized the only way back down was to....back down! When we finally saw people pushing golf carts past us giving quizzical looks as we drove up to a tee box, we understood that some mistakes had been made. I used the tee box to get the car pointed down the hill again, shouted "*fore!*" and we trundled back down the hill, past dazed looking golfers where we realized the entrance road was only about one-quarter-inch wider than the golf path and about two feet past it! In spite of it all we still were allowed to play there, although I don't believe they appreciated my California yodel on the elevated tees: "yodel-lay-he-a, golf ball on the way!"



*And Now Back to Reality...*Ultimately all good things must end and so our Autobahn Adventure ended as well. After a wonderful 10 days we pointed our Porsche back towards Frankfurt where we had to return the car; this hurt. Would I go again? You bet. In a heartbeat. If you are a Porsche/Car enthusiast you will definitely not be disappointed as my narrative here only touches upon all of the activities and sights we saw ! If you want to know more don't hesitate to contact Mark and Tina on

714.964.0280 or visit their website at www.autobahn-adventures.com

New Board Members and Officers for 2009

New Board Member were elected at the end of 2008 by ballots send to each member of the North Florida Region. Thanks to the generous nature of some of the folks involved in a multiperson tie for the last three board positions, the tie was resolved and the Board Members for 2009 are (in alphabetical order):

Russ Aldridge, Don Boggs, Danny Fuchs, Steve LaRosa, Scott Roberts, Charles Stratton, Tom Vlasak, and Barry Waters. We are fortunate to have two new Board Members from the Destin Area—Russ Aldridge and Scott Roberts.

Thanks to all the new Directors for their willingness to serve.

A special thanks to Charles Johnson and Mindy Waters for helping resolve the tie, and to Barry Waters, Mindy Waters and Alan Berg for serving on the nomination committee.

The Board met by e-mail and selected a new slate of Officers of 2009. These Officers are:

President:	Steve LaRosa	VP:	Danny Fuchs
Sec. :	Charlie Stratton	Treasurer:	Don Boggs
Newsletter Ed. :	Alan Berg	Assoc. Ed:	Barry Water
Membership Chair:	Barry Waters	Safety/Webmaster:	Ian Anderson
Area Director Destin:	Russ Aldrich		

Thanks to these new Officers for their willingness to serve.

We identified and thanked the outgoing Officers and Directors in the last newsletter, but thanks again to them and to Ian Anderson for a great year as President and Webmaster.

Der Porsche Brief Wants Your Advertisement

Would you like to reach over 130 Porsche Club of America Members in North Florida--between Pensacola and Jacksonville—with information about your business. *Der Porsche Brief* is published every other month by the North Florida Region of the Porsche Club of America and would be happy to publish an ad of your design once twice or as many times as you would like. Fees for ads are:

One half page	\$50 per issue
One quarter page	\$25 per issue
Business cards	\$12.50 per issue
Other sizes	Negotiable

Please contact Alan N. Berg at one of the addresses listed on the back cover.

Destin Christmas Party

On December 4, 2007, Porschephiles from the Destin Area Celebrated the holidays at the beautiful home of Chuck Lobello. About thirty Destin area Porsche folks attended the party and had a great time, good food and fine company. Thanks to Chuck for providing the locale and to Scott Roberts for information on the party. All the party pictures were taken by Jasmine Berg.



Region Calendar—JANUARY, FEBRUARY, MARCH 2009

JANUARY

7—Destin Social at new location—Cantina Laredo in Grand Boulevard. Social is on Wednesday this month only, because the first Thursday is New Years Day and the second Thursday is the night of the BCS Championship football game. Socials are normally the first Thursday of every month and will be at the Cantina Laredo in Grand Boulevard

17—North Florida Region Post Holiday Party. See information on Flyer on page 7.

21—No Tallahassee Social this month because of the closeness of the date to the Post Holiday Party. Normally socials are the third Wednesday of each month at 6:30 PM, at Gill's Tavern, 2545 N. Monroe Street, Tallahassee.

FEBRUARY

5-- Destin Social at Cantina Laredo in Grand Boulevard. Socials are the first Thursday of every month at 6:PM at the Cantina Laredo in Grand Boulevard.

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

MARCH

5—Destin Social at Cantina Laredo in Grand Boulevard. Socials are the first Thursday of every month at 6:PM at the Cantina Laredo in Grand Boulevard.

15-17—Amelia Island Concours, Amelia Island, Florida. <http://www.ameliaconcours.org>

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

WANT TO SEE YOUR ARTICLE OR PICTURE IN PRINT

Der Porsche Brief welcomes submissions from members and others dealing with topics of interest to North Florida Region members. If you have an interesting experience, car or observation, a tech tip or Porsche fix, please share it with North Florida Region members. Articles and pictures are welcome. Due to copyright restrictions, we cannot publish articles and pictures from other sources without permission, so please submit your original article or picture to us for publication. The article need not be long and most picture formats can be accommodated. Please see the back cover for submission addresses. Thanks for your help



REGION AFTER THE HOLIDAYS PARTY DETAILS

What: After the Holidays Party North Florida Region

When: 17 January 2009, 6:30 PM

Where: Chez Linda and Danny Fuchs, 621 Forest Lair, Tallahassee, Florida 32312.

Suggested Hotels near the Fuchs home (near I-10 at Thomasville Rd.): Cabot Lodge 850-386-7500 1653 Raymond Diehl Road, Tallahassee, 32308 (ask for executive Suite AAA or AARP rate \$102 Hampton Inn 850-574-4900 3388 Lonnbladh Rd, Tallahassee, 32308 (AAA or AARP rate \$98) Please use Map Quest for directions to the Fuchs or nearby hotels

Why: Paella, Fun, Door Prizes, Porsche Talk, Old Friends, New Friends

How and How Much: Cost is \$30 per person in advance, \$35 at the Door. RSVP to Danny or Linda Fuchs, 621 Forest Lair, Tallahassee, Florida 32312 with a check payable to NFR/PCA. Phone (850) 893-1621. Email: dmfuchs@comcast.net

Dress: Casual

Please RSVP by January 12, 2009. We have to turn in a headcount by that day. Please RSVP even if you are paying at the door.



Hurry and get in your RSVP. The Crew is waiting for your response. (Photos-A.Berg)

.Please note that the Tallahassee Social scheduled for January 21 has been **CANCELLED** due to the closeness of the date to the Post Holiday Party. Normally socials are the third Wednesday of each month at 6:30 PM, at Gill's Tavern, 2545 N. Monroe Street, Tallahassee.

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