

## Porsche Parade 2007

by John Miller [images by T. White & Lee Lichtenstein ]

**I**t was all in the numbers.

52 – The fifty second edition of the annual gathering put together by Porsche Club Members

5 – The duration, in number of days, for Parade 2007.

960 – The number of entrants registered (over 2000 attendees, counting spouses and kids!)

3 & 1/2 – the average number of days it took entrants to drive to San Diego.

∞ (symbol for infinity) — The credit card bills for a trip like this.

‰ (priceless) – The value of a trip like this with a Porsche.

*...Those that choose to fly to Porsche Parade rather than drive their car will always regret the decision."*

I didn't get the gentleman's name that coined that quote, but they are words I cannot forget, having made the very mistake once.....a mistake never to be repeated.

A quick primer for the unfamiliar: Porsche Parade is an annual event presented by Porsche Club of America that brings together Porsche Cars and Porsche People from all over the world for a week of dinners, drinks and car talk. They even manage to work in a few car events including a Concours, a Rallye, a Parade, an Autocross, occasionally a Drivers ED(track) event, an Art show, and numerous smaller gatherings such as tech sessions and scenic tours. The 2007 edition of Porsche Parade in southern California (unquestionably, the Porsche capital of the world in sheer numbers of Porsches on the road) was jammed with attendees.

The following is a sampling of the 2007 Parade events ---- at five days, the events of the week are numerous and tightly scheduled, making it a challenge if you in endeavor to attend or participate in more than two major events.

### Concours Preparation

It's not an official event, but it should be. In the days leading up to the Concours, entrants have been known to spend 12-14 hours straight under, over and inside their cars, going after every last speck of dust and dirt. For 2007, Concours prep was staged in an underground (read: COOL and DRY) parking garage at the main Parade hotel.



Wandering through Concours prep is a visual feast. Not only do you see nearly all the Concours entrant cars up close, but in an open state, as owners prepare their cars---- everything from open

doors and engine covers to cars on ramps in various stages of dis-assembly/re-assembly. And while it's bad form to interrupt a Concours entrant during prep/cleaning, many of them are friendly enough to chat for a moment or two.



### Concours and Porsche Paddock

The Parade 2007 Concours was staged on the rolling hills of the Admiral Baker (private) golf course. It's not always possible to make sense of the car groupings, but it hardly matters once you are among the cars. As with all Parade Concours, unique models abound. Where else can you casually stroll up to a group of



cars (photos 7-8) that are valued from 500,000 to 1,000,000 dollars (or more)? Off to the side, and to the casual observer it might even appear to be THE Concours

itself, was the Porsche Paddock. Cars in the Paddock aren't judged, though many of them were unique enough and certainly clean enough to have been entrants.



## TSD Rallye

The Parade Time–Speed–Distance Rally was staged on the second day of the weeklong schedule and attracted 127 teams. The rallye spanned approximately 120 miles and took the better part of 4 hours, heading far enough south of San Diego, that even a slight miscalculation on navigation would land a driver in Mexico. The Rally was broken down into five ‘Legs’, each leg being scored separately. A common misconception however, is that all Rallye participants are skilled veterans. At Rallye’s end, several teams were overheard grumbling to anyone that would listen –they became ‘trapped’ behind a somewhat clueless and wandering Porsche rallyist who had not detected the competitors behind him or the speeds they needed to maintain. When a passing lane finally appeared, the trapped Rallyists made an aggressive pass and in doing so, missed one single Rallye instruction, which took them two miles off course and ultimately costs there chances for a high place finish.



## Gimmick Rallye

The Gimmick rallye was again on the Parade agenda and again proved quite popular. Unfortunately, for the 2007 Parade, it was run concurrent to the TSD rally and thus it was a ‘one-or-the-other’ choice. The premise of the gimmick rally is to follow printed directions and answer questions based on the locations that you are taken to or past. It all sounds simple in theory ---follow the route and answer the questions----but you can ‘imagine’ how frustrating it can get. All of the TSD Rallye had to ‘imagine’ it. Next year, Parade organizers are hoping to separate the two events and offer an opportunity to run both rallies.

## Autocross

The Autocross, a timed competition where drivers essentially navigate through a temporary obstacle course marked by cones and striped pavement, is the most physically challenging event of the week (with no disrespect to the Concours prep people who face a different but equally tough set of physical demands). The San Diego Parade Autocross was refreshingly encouraging. The course (on paper) appeared to have no serious ‘traps’ in it, but a careful walk of the track told differently. To gain perspective on the Autocross course, I enlisted (highjacked) a seasoned Porsche+Audi racetrack driver, Oliver Pinkpank, along for the walk/assessment. The course was set up in the expansive parking lot of Qualcomm Stadium. The lot has so many elevation and directional changes that if it ever snowed in San Diego, a slalom ski run could be set up here. Paper course maps don’t tell you when a curve is off-camber, that the approach to the decreasing radius turn is actually on a downhill grade, or that the pavement

through a pair of ‘S’ turns is somewhat rippled. While the average run only lasted about one and a half minutes using everyday street Porsches, a couple of super-modified Porsche navigated the course in approximately one minute, twelve seconds, which may not seem like a huge difference, but is an eternity in the Autocross world. An interesting point—the super-modified Porsches that ran the fastest times of the day were not the latest and greatest carbon-fibered, turbocharged, super expensive 2007 models. The both happen to be Porsche be a few years older.....37 years to be exact. Both were 1970 Porsche 914’s.

## At Lands and Belts End

Of course, the week wasn’t just about events. Although it was great spending time with friends and club members from ones home region, there were so many other occasions to meet equally interesting people from other regions and hear (or see) fascinating Porsche stories, that there’s a temptation to just bring a video camera everywhere and never turn it off....but that would interfere with the central purpose: To have a good time. And of course, there were banquets---more banquets than ones belt or could tolerate. A variation this year was to stage the banquets at a variety of off-hotel locations, including a beachfront party on the military base that occupies the north half Coronado Island, a barbeque at SeaWorld, and the showstopper of all Parade banquets, the Victory banquet on the flight deck of the aircraft carrier USS Midway as the sun set over the Pacific



ocean. Amid all the chatter and rumors was the confirmation: Parade 2008 will be held in Charlotte, North Carolina, and the 2009 edition will be held in the Denver, Colorado

area. Early on, Colorado Springs was suggested; Late in the week, Keystone was the location circulating.

All of the above barely scratches the surface of the many events that took place throughout the week. The Art Show/Auction, an off-road tour featuring the Porsche SUV, the Cayenne, guided scenic road tours, and numerous tech sessions to name a few. This year resurrected the hugely popular slotcar racing track---interesting how people with fabulous sports cars still see the appeal in racing toys. The prevailing truth of Porsche Parade is this: There are so many events and activities that You Can’t Do It All. For 2007, it wasn’t endurance, but rather logistics that conspired against desire to see and do everything Parade had to offer. A lesson to be learned for next year: Go early (and go often).