

Porsche Parade 2015: *French Lick*

by John Miller [images by J. Miller & L. Lichtenstein]



The sixtieth edition of Porsche PARADE - the annual gathering put together by Porsche fanatics *for* Porsche fanatics capped off the month of June in spectacular fashion. Porsche PARADE has been organized by the Porsche Club of America for several years now, but make no mistake, it wouldn't take place were it not for the massive effort performed by volunteer members from regions nationwide --- and the turnout was monstrous.



A quick primer for the unfamiliar: Porsche Parade is an annual event presented by Porsche Club of America (PCA) that brings together Porsche Cars and Porsche fanatics from all over the world for a week of events including a Concours, two Rallies, a Parade, an Autocross, a Drivers Ed(track) event, a Museum-caliber historic display of cars, and numerous smaller gatherings such as tech sessions, zone parties, and scenic drives.

Welcome to the O-C



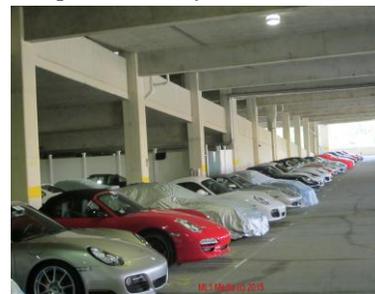
The 2015 edition of Porsche Parade took place in Orange County.....Indiana. Specifically, the 1.7 square mile town of French Lick, population: 1,808..... until PCA showed up. The Porsche crowd overwhelmed the small southern Indiana town with an (estimated) 1300 attendees with over 800 Porsches (*and one Lotus*).

What follows is a sampling of the 2015 Parade events. At seven days in length, the events of the week are numerous and tightly scheduled, making it a challenge, but possible to attend or participate in most major events.

Concours Preparation

It's not an official event, but it's widely attended. In the days leading up to the Concours, entrants have been known

to spend 12-14 hours straight under, over and inside their Porsches, going after every last speck of dust and dirt. Concours prep and the Concours itself were outdone by Mother Nature. Relentless rain prior to Parade made for challenging work conditions and worse, flooded out the designated Concours display field. As would be repeated throughout the week, the French Lick Resort staff quickly and professionally assessed the situation and provided a



solution. Prep was staged in the covered parking garage and the indoor (read: COOL and DRY) activities building 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 disassembly/reassembly.



Concours

The Chicago Region might have been accused of 'stacking the deck' when it came to claiming Concours awards. There were far

more Porsches entered from the Chicago region than the rest. That more cars were entered however doesn't make them automatic winners. Preparation and effort is what wins the awards. As noted, ongoing the rain made the intended display area --a picturesque fairway on a golf



course adjoining the French Lick Resort, unusable. The



resort management worked around the clock with PCA to restage the Concours in a not-so-picturesque (but very dry) multi-level parking garage. While not an ideal setting, it was a functional solution that was needed. And the collection of cars was excellent---everything from rare (and ancient) Porsche 356's to the latest Porsche Supercar, the hybrid 918.

TSD Rallye

The Parade Time-Speed-Distance Rallye was staged on the third day of the weeklong schedule and attracted 137 teams. The rallye spanned approximately 120 miles and took the better part of 4 hours, winding through the scenic backroads of southern Indiana. This year, however, there was a major shift in the presentation of rally-route instructions. In previous Parade Rallyes, even a slight miscalculation on navigation could land an entrant on a dead end gravel backroad in Costa Rica. Traps were devious and numerous and left many entrants drained, angry or both. This year, the Rallymasters took a level-headed approach and presented entrants with route instructions that included a mileage notation for every change of direction (turns). Truly, a return to the original concepts (time+speed+distance). The Rally was broken down into five 'Legs', each leg being scored separately. While not all the Rallye participants were skilled veterans, at Rallye's end (unlike previous years), there was little if any grumbling about being 'trapped' behind a clueless wandering Porsche rallyist. The results of the revised approach speak volumes. Of 137 entrants, 135 finished. There were no protests and the general atmosphere of participants was truly upbeat.

And for those Rallyists that WANTED the devious, numerous, brain draining, twists and turns, there was the...

Gimmick Rallye

The Gimmick Rallye is now a regular event on the Parade agenda and again proved quite popular. 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*. The Gimmick Rallye competition was extremely close, with a mere 19 points separating the top from the bottom of finishers.

[*I can imagine---I didn't have the heart to do the event.]
July 2015

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 French Lick Parade Autocross, 'on paper' looked encouraging. The course was set up on paved runway of the local airport. A runway...as in, a LONG, STRAIGHT, STRETCH OF SMOOTH ASPHALT. What could be more straightforward? A lot, apparently. A careful walk of the track told the story. The course was set up in something of a 'T' layout, starting from a taxiway, turning right onto the runway, driving a good distance thru a coned layout to the end, doing a 180 turn and then heading back the way you came, continuing to the other half of the runway. The 180 degree turn was a bit of a challenge, but the return portion up the runway re-used some (but not all) of the same cone setups that were used on the way down the runway. It led to more than a few pauses, stutters, off-course excursions and a slew of DNF's.



While the average run only lasted about 55-65 seconds using everyday street Porsches, a couple of super-modified Porsches navigated

the course in the 48 second range---which may not seem like a huge difference, but is an eternity in the autocross world.

Once again, to make a point--the super-modified Porsches that ran the fastest times of the day were not the latest and greatest carbon-fibered, turbocharged, super expensive 'GTx' models. They both happen to be a few years older.....43 and 44 year old (modified) Porsche 914's. The closest modified non-914 time and car? 52.8 seconds in a 1978 911SC. To be fair, there was a 2015 GT3 that turned in 53.11 second score, so there has been some 'progress' at Porsche.....on the other hand, a 2002 Boxster S in stock form turned in a 52.21.



Nestled in at the Autocross was the largely underappreciated **Michelin Drive & Experience**. The 'Experience' offered the chance to drive a new Porsche around an autocross-style course. It gave all



(licensed) Parade entrants a chance to take a couple of laps around the course in a new Porsche Boxster GTS equipped with MICHELIN Pilot Sport Cup 2 tires. I took the drive – all the fun of an autocross, with none of the pressures of the clock or going off course. Sadly, this event didn't get proper advertising. Such that it was at the Autocross site (a few miles from Parade central) the large majority of Experience participants were Autocross participants and a significant number of them couldn't make their pre-registered timeslots due to logistics of running in the AX. This is the sort of event that everyone *should* take advantage of ---driving a new model Porsche as aggressively as comfort allows, on a closed course, on excellent tires.

Historics, Museum and The PARADE

The 60th Parade **Historics Display** featured a collection of notable Porsches owned by PCA members as well as cars from the Porsche AG museum. This year's display featured



three major groupings: Porsche Speedsters, Turbos, and 912s, and managed to include a trio of Porsche GIANTS,

staging a Porsche 917 next to a 918, next to a 959.

The **Museum** display brought far more than could



adequately be described here. The collection of notable memorabilia, photographs, videos, and significant Porsche cars was first rate.

The **Parade of Porsches** has become an annual Parade juggernaut. The logistics of lining up 400 or so Porsches, leading them on a 'spirited' (police escorted) parade through



town, getting them back to a staging area (lining them all up again) and then moving/arranging them to an area for a photo-shoot is beyond a fistful of Tylenols. The

picturesque setting of the West Baden Springs resort made for a memorable departure of the Porsches. The return to the French Lick Resort and the staging for THE photo shoot (an aerial 'crane' shot) made for a memorable....scramble (to put it politely). The photo at the staging was taken at approximately 2:30pm. The staged aerial shot occurred around 4:15pm.



Miscellaneous

There were, of course many, many more events and attractions at Parade 2015. A model-R/C car challenge, numerous scenic drives and enough banquets that PCA



could attract the makers of Tums or Roloids as a sponsor. Porsche AG used the banquets as the opportunity to

make several significant debuts: The eye-popping Porsche 911 GTS Club coupe (exclusive to PCA members) and the SPECTACULAR Porsche Cayman GT4.



Not all the interesting Porsches were found at Parade. One of the Porsche-recommended 'self-guided' tours took the authors into Kentucky to visit several bourbon distilleries (Makers Mark is *THE* place to go, by the way). On the way back we pulled off and found this. A Porsche 924 converted to SERIOUS rally car specs. The owner came out –having no idea what Parade was or that it was just over an hour away – and talked Porsches with us and showed us his own private collection – three 924's (and a few VW's). A REAL Porsche fanatic, even if he never heard of PCA.

