

# Celebrating Gran Turismo Style

*Experiencing a great motoring tradition and a ghostly GT3.*

Story by Edward Quan | Photos by Steve Grimaldi & Baird Tewksbury

ABOVE: Bayshore Inn Resort & Spa, Waterton, AB.

I recently had the pleasure of participating in a seven-day Grand Tour, joining over two dozen Porsches, including a GT3, a Targa, and a Macan, along with 911s, Boxsters, and Caymans. We roamed across two provinces and three states, covering over 2300 km, and enjoyed overnight stays in Oliver, Rossland, Waterton, Spokane, and Winthrop.

Our tour leader, Wayne Shalagan, described our Grand Tour adventure as Gran Turismo. This is an Italian term referring to driving a sporty, yet luxurious automobile over a long distance. Back in the 50's and 60's, this required a powerful engine, a comfortable ride, and a lavish interior, all wrapped up in stylish bodywork. Gran Turismo is how the wealthy and aristocratic crossed the European continent: at high speed, yet with the ability to easily tackle a twisty alpine road.

Our venture into Gran Turismo began on a bright Sunday morning last September. Our Porsches converged in Abbotsford, where we received our driving route handbooks and installed our Grand Tour decals on both doors and a third decal, with the names of each car's driver and co-driver, at the top of each left door.

To start, our route took us eastbound along the scenic Highway 3 to our first stop at Manning Park Resort where we were greeted by several travelling motorcyclists. It was on this route leg of the journey that I learned that when motorcyclists pat their helmets, that means 'law enforcement ahead'. A handy tip for future drives!

Hedley, a small mining town with a population of 250 was our next stop. There, we learned about the history of the region. From 1850 until the 1960's, there was plenty of

gold panned around Hedley. Even today, people still pan for gold in the Similkameen River; they say no one has yet found the original mother lode and hope springs eternal.

On Monday morning, we all departed from the Oliver Coast Hotel and headed east to Rossland after refueling. On this part of the trip, we participated in the first of a three-part rally challenge: the fuel economy challenge. A proper mileage and fuel consumption reading were required upon arrival at Rossland.

As we departed Osoyoos, we stopped at Anarchist Mountain Lookout which offers a panoramic view of both Osoyoos Lake and Washington State. Taking in this view brought back fond memories of my last visit to Penticton and Osoyoos for a winery tour story published in our club magazine in the fall of 2022. Our distance to Rossland from Osoyoos was 241 km, the shortest day drive of the tour, which left us with plenty of time to explore Grand Forks during lunch.

Upon arrival at the Josie Hotel at Red Mountain Resort on the outskirts of Rossland, we discovered a unique boutique property offering comfortable accommodations and secure garage parking for all our Porsches. The group met up for cocktails and a dinner banquet which was a terrific way to end our day.

The Average Speed Challenge, the second of three rally challenges on our adventure, was held on Tuesday morning. Each Porsche departed Red Mountain Resort at staggered times and we each attempted to maintain an average speed of 82 km/hr until we found Wayne Shalagan's Speed Yellow 911. Interestingly, we were not told the distance between our hotel and Wayne.



A few of the participants were operating GPS systems programmed to take them to our next destination, Waterton. Unfortunately, GPS took the drivers off Highway 3 resulting in them missing checkpoint Wayne and receiving a DNF score.

During the day, we visited the small towns of Creston, Fernie, and Sparwood en route to our destination, Waterton Lakes National Park. With two nights' accommodations in the National Park, we had a full day to experience the natural wonders of one of the most beautiful destinations in the Canadian Rockies.

On Wednesday morning, we all began to wash and prep our Porsches for our Show 'N' Shine in the hotel parking lot. Held in collaboration with the Vintage Sports Club of Calgary, we received a warm welcome by Chris Durtnall President.

A group of us enjoyed High Tea at the Prince of Wales Hotel, overlooking Waterton Lake, which I highly

recommend. Built in 1927, the dramatic hilltop site above Upper Waterton Lake was identified as the ideal spot for the lodge in 1913 by a railway baron and President of the Great Northern Railway, Louis Hill.

If you visit today - and I recommend you do - the hotel staff are uniformed in Scottish kilts, and guests use brass door room keys. As in old London, the hotel's single elevator has an operator and is less than a square meter inside.

At noon, we all boarded a Waterton Shoreline Cruise to explore the upper and lower Waterton Lakes which cross the US-Canada Border. No passports are required for a cruise around the lakes. We learned from our tour guides about the local wildlife. We were also told that the lake freezes over in winter months, with the melting snow replenishing lake water.

On Thursday morning, we were scheduled to depart for the Going to the Sun Road, an 80 km route in

BOTTOM: Prince of Wales Hotel, Waterton, AB.

TOP: Sun Mountain Lodge, Winthrop, WA.

northern Montana. Unfortunately, we learned that construction had resulted in several kilometres of our chosen path being loose gravel. With great disappointment, most of the group decided to reroute south. However, a few Porsches did choose to drive the Going to the Sun Road.

Around noon, several Porsches converged on a local Chick-Fil-A for take-away lunch and followed that with a quick rendezvous with Trevor, President, and Christi, of PCA - Inland Region at Woodland Park. After a group photo, other Inland Region members escorted us through Montana and Idaho to our destination in Spokane, Washington.

On the interstate, I was following a Porsche GT3 which I could hear but could not see. The engine note told me when it was accelerating; I tried to keep up to no avail. After a long day's drive chasing the ghost GT3, I looked forward to a pleasant evening in downtown Spokane.

Friday began with a Gimmick Rally, the last of our three challenges. For this challenge, we departed at staggered times and were required to answer 13 questions; such as what is the cost to get into the brothel at the motel in Davenport? After we answered the first 11 questions, one of the best parts of our driving tour was before us.

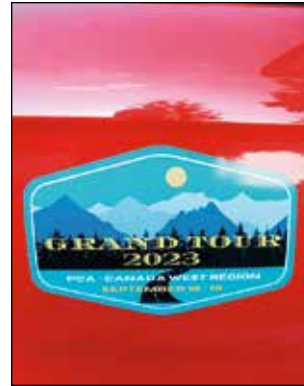
Located just north of the Grand Coulee Dam, we turned onto Columbia River Road. This quiet, twisty, hilly valley road took us into an area with hardly any inhabitants other than a few cattle and horses. This 60 km route, following the base of a rocky valley, nothing but a desert landscape with sagebrush on both sides, gave us an opportunity to experience the exhilarating dynamics of driving a Porsche.

Sun Mountain Lodge, located high above the old western town of Winthrop, was our final night's accommodation. There, we enjoyed our closing banquet and the announcement of the rally challenge winners.

Early Saturday morning, we all departed Winthrop for Sedro-Woolley, where we met up with PCA – PNWR's Vice-President Gary Barklind and viewed some of their members' Porsches. The terminus of the Grand Tour was at Scotty Brown Restaurant in Bellingham where we all said our final goodbyes.

Gran Turismo is a part of automotive history in which I am proud to have taken a part. Porsches were built for epic cross-country journeys, and we Porsche owners ought to continue celebrating the great roads, great food, and great people of our region with the Gran Turismo gusto of generations past.

But, having said that, I may need a faster Porsche; now which direction did that GT3 go?



BOTTOM: Gran Tour participants meet with the members of PCA-Inland NW Region.



**GRAND TOUR 2023 RALLY**

**1st Prize**

Dan and Shelley Larson, Car #18, 2022 Boxster T

**2nd Prize**

Nuno and Sean Cardoso, Car #23, 2017, 911 Carrera S

**3rd Prize**

Zsuzsanna Byers and Mike Markstein, Car #21, Cayman

**GRAND TOUR 2023 AWARDS**

**Spirit of the Tour Award**

Michael and Mary Chiang, Car #5, 2017 911 4GTS

**Iron Man Award**

Baird Tewksbury, Car #8, 2005, 911

**Hard Luck Award**

Brian and Teresa Fournier, Car #10, 2023 Cayman GTS

**Bad Timing Award**

Francis Chin, Car #13, 2007, 911 GT3RS