

Spring Classic Driving Tour IX

Dawn on April 17 crept over the ridge bathing the Ohio River Valley in a muffled iridescent light, continually changing, like the hues in a kaleidoscope as the sun rose in the east. On the banks of the Ohio, New Richmond's historic waterfront gently came to life as the soft light and serenity flowed into a pleasant morning filled with some of the area's most interesting automobiles and people!

By 8:30 over 70 specialty cars, parked nose to tail, stretched along the waterfront on Susanna Way, past the bandstand onto Front Street all the way to Haussermann Park. Buck's Riverside Grill opened early with special "Driving Tour Breakfasts" and beverages for the hungry enthusiasts. With those interested in a more spirited pace "gridded" along Susanna Way, scheduled to bug out at 9 am. on a journey East along the Scenic Ohio River Byway. The more leisurely paced group queued up on Front Street, overlooking the new home of the Showboat Majestic Floating Theater, departed for points east and north at 9:20 am.

Standing along the waterfront as the cars depart to explore the ridges and valleys of southern Ohio offers a whirling mix of sound, color and action that delights the senses; the rasp of modern V8s, the throaty power of a straight six and the distinct tone of the flat six, along with the high pitched fours reflect off the hills and water to create a morning symphony that starts your day just right.

The ninth annual Spring Classic Driving Tour wound along the Ohio river to historic Point Pleasant where the route turned away from the river, twisting through ravines, climbing to crest ridges before plummeting back into hollows teeming with the fresh blooms of spring. Exploring alternatives to the more well-traveled paths took the cars along Old State Routes that traced Indian Trails that more than likely followed animal paths to the banks of the river from the high ground. A stop at the Home Place in Georgetown added to the day, and the waistline of those that explored the delights of the bakery in depth; rumor has it that the supply of pies was greatly depleted and appreciated by the end of the day!

As the cars left the twists and turns of Brown County gliding into the rolling farmlands of scenic Adams County the roads became less rigorous but no less scenic. The partially clouded skies kept the temperatures comfortable as the

second destination at Erwin Farms Garden Barn was achieved. Small cars and large agricultural machines played well together in the afternoon, offering a perfect opportunity for silliness!

The return leg of the tour turned southwest from Cherry Forks, meandering through the lush countryside, brilliant in its fresh new flora for the year. A circuitous route brought us back to the banks of the mighty Ohio in Ripley. Historic Underground Railroad sites dot the village, always a good spot to stretch the legs. The final drive to cap the day followed U.S Route 52 West, one of America's ten most scenic roads, back to New Richmond where the motoring enthusiasts enjoyed a late lunch at the Front Street Café and the other waterfront eateries.

A passel of Porsches added plenty of pleasure to the proceedings. Porsche Piloto extraordinaire Dick Weiss led the charge, driving with the Spirited group in son Terry's 1977 911; the famous Speedster Carrera was left in the garage with the threat of tumultuous weather later in the day. Carl Iseman and Russell Clarke drove their 356s while "friend of the DSG" Jim Mohrfield drove his immaculate white 911 Cabriolet. Brent Fagan drove with Ellis Hubbard in Ellis' Viper, Brent spotted an issue on his Porsche and made the late switch to the V10 powered Viper, they kept up with the crowd nicely! Peter Boettcher and Tony Humbert were called away from a day of fun by last minute work related issues.

Along with the Porsche owners in Drei Staaten Gruppe (DSG) of 356 enthusiasts, several OVR PCA members also enjoyed the day. Other local clubs participating include the Austin Healey Club, Mercedes Benz, Greater Cincinnati Miata Club, Tri-State Triumphs, Vintage Triumph Register, TR Six Pack Club, British Car club of Greater Cincinnati, SW Ohio MG T Owners, Cincinnati Concours d'Elegance Foundation, Queen City Coopers and the SCCA. Donations have been sent to each club's chosen charities in recognition of those that participated to make the world a happy place filled with fantastic machinery providing sound, color and action! Thanks to all that drove, navigated and made the day a success. Look for details on the Autumn Classic Driving Tour, scheduled for Saturday October 9, 2021 as we maintain a safe social distance of one car length for every ten miles per hour!

-Kurt Niemeyer

Photos; Tim Ross