

Days 60 – 68

The Monday visit back to Yosemite was enjoyable for several reasons: this time entered the park from the Western gate, which involved transiting a very nice set of roads, including a very twisty canyon; and second, because it was less crowded than on Saturday, just as hoped. Talked to a couple of young climbers about to rock climb up “The Cathedral”, an 80 degree rock face. It gave me butterflies just talking about it. Among the three of us, clearly I was the one with the smallest cajones, and one of the couple was an eighteen year old girl! Took the curvaceous route 41 back to Awahnee again, and applied ‘motorcycle rules’ from the get go. One young fellow in a Jetta clearly objected to me passing him on double solids so as to get in position to pass the lead motorhome, gesturing in my mirror expressing outrage and “what the hell do you think you’re doing? How’s that going to get you down the mountain any faster?” He soon discovered the answer as I blasted by the rest of the cars and the motorhome, then he quickly followed suit and tried to chase me all the way down the mountain. We had a great time and by the end I had turned in to his buddy.

Spent another great afternoon/evening with Roger and Trish involving lunch, dinner, swimming pool, and a fantastic night sky. Saw the space station, another satellite, and a total of about 10 clear shooting stars over the several days, with two of the latter qualifying as “fireballs”. Very cool. Took off Tuesday morning, basically heading directly west towards the Santa Cruz area and crossing a mix of very dry cattle land and irrigated agricultural areas. The highlights were the large steep up and down grades and massive earthen damn creating the San Luis Reservoir on route 152. Probably the single largest manmade thing I’ve yet seen on the trip. It felt so good to finally get to the coolness and humidity coming off the Pacific Ocean.

As I mentioned in an earlier post, met up with Weendoggy/Glenn at Bruce Canepa’s shop in Scotts Valley. At the time, the latter was hosting a luncheon for a group from the Quail Lodge, so the parking lot was chock full of Ferraris, Porsches, a real slab side Cobra, a blower Bentley from the 20s, yada yada yada. It portended a cars cars cars weekend. Glenn and I toured the museum, chock full of pristine and choice cars, and then moved on to the gallery overlooking the workshop. There we met a fellow who was the cleanup driver for the Quail Lodge touring group (he followed in a Ford Explorer and dealt with any mechanical issues experienced by the touring group-i.e. he called someone). He encouraged us to march right down into the garage and act like we owned the place, so we could take a look around. This is exactly the method I’ve employed since the age of 16 when my buddies Bruce, Jeff, Greg and I used to sneak into the Watkins Glen F1 race pits with a high success rate. I’ve found that it’s even easier when you’re a greybeard instead of a punk, so Glenn and I had a nice leisurely tour of the garage. There were plenty of street cars undergoing work, but we gravitated to the old can am cars, of which there was a Porsche 917/10, McLaren M8D, and the final iteration of the all-conquering UOP Shadow. I even prevailed upon Mr. Canepa to pose with me for a pic (this trip is turning into a ‘Zelig’ experience for my car and I).

Glenn then led me to a local restaurant named “Campos”, where he treated me to a great lunch. Turns out Glenn is recently retired after 40 years (!) working with and managing heavy equipment operations for the county. He has apparently acquired a lot of skills so he handles home plumbing, electrical, landscaping, grading, deck/fence building, and god knows what else. His Mark I is chock full of mods, many of which had him as the trailblazer. It comes to mind that if the forum members I’ve met on this trip are representative of the whole, we are one capable bunch!

Glenn and I then parted, promising to meet up Saturday at the Laguna Seca Historic races. I headed off to the Will-Call ticket office at the Seaside Embassy Suites, hoping to succumb and buy a parking pass so I could park in the infield Cobra parking corral on Saturday. Unfortunately, they wouldn't be open until Thursday, so would have to check back. Then, as I mentioned in an earlier post, ended up in a relatively cheap hotel with the Travelocity discount, located in the city of Marina, seemingly the most persistently foggy place on the peninsula. On Wednesday, drove over to the track to see what was up. Was allowed to drive right up to the paddock and wander around watching all the teams setting up their mobile shops and getting their cars teched. Fantastic batch of racecars! The security woman at the paddock gate had initially asked if I was seeking a historic car paddock pass. She explained that if you have someone you know who was renting a race equipment berth in the paddock and they had space within their rented footprint, you could get a Laguna official to authorize a paddock parking pass. Well, I ran into Roland, a race team manager who's a friend of Thomas Payne (Restored 30's garage) and who Gordy and I met in Elkhart Lake. Turns out that a guy who was supposed to park in his paddock area had come down with appendicitis, so I inherited his parking spot. I hate benefitting from the misfortunes of others, but that doesn't stop me from doing so. Schwing!!

Spent Thursday checking out sights on the Peninsula, including the Mecum auction (hundreds of pristine cars parked on the golf course, then one by one rolled/driven into the auction tent -what a huckster event, pomp and circumstance followed by yelling and screaming); Pebble Beach where some of the concourse cars were returning from a tour, an internet motorcycle auction was on display (someone listed a restored 70s Husqvarna 400 dirt bike for \$30,000!!-turns out it was ridden by Jack Penton, a famous and successful American ISDT racer-no bids as of Sunday morning), and dirt was aplenty; and parts of 17 Mile Drive. Picked Jennifer up at the Monterey Airport late in the evening and went directly to the hotel where she crashed upon arrival.

Friday, Jennifer and I went out to breakfast at a Pacific Grove café, where we got in to a long conversation with a corvette owner (he had watched us drive by and recognized us as the cobra people). He had his car at Mecum and we both agreed that we weren't impressed by Mecum's sales success the previous day. After that, dropped Jennifer off at the golf course and spent the day prowling the Pacific Grove car show (leading up to an evening tour for them) and going out to the "Legends of the Autobahn" show in Carmel Valley, held on yet another beautiful golf course. Talked to an early Porsche 911 owner from Bend Oregon who extolled the virtues of living there-I really need to talk to my wife about moving to Oregon. Note: driving around the Monterey Peninsula during Pebble Beach week is a real chore-gridlock everywhere, but if you drive off onto side roads the iPhone will figure out rerouting and get you where you need to be. While in Pacific Grove, met up with a guy driving an early 60s Elva street/race car cross country for charity. I had met him in Elkhart Lake earlier in his tour. Elva was an early race car manufacturer that later merged with McLaren, and whose name is a concatenation of the French words "El va", which means "she goes". When I saw him in Elkhart Lake pushing his car into a parking spot, I had commented to him "I see that 'she goes' ". He responded with "you know, that's what the name of the car means". I had responded "yeah, I know". He said "nobody knows what that means", at which point I had answered with "how dare you call me a nobody"! We laughed at that, and did again in Pacific Grove when we met up again.

Picked up Jennifer after her golf game, and after she freshened up at the motel we went off to Fisherman's Wharf for dinner. We both had an excellent Steak and Shrimp dinner overlooking the ocean, where we saw this mother of all monstrous seals hunting for its dinner. Massive dog shaped head

on top of an enormous body-would not want to mess with it in its element! After that, we dropped \$20 to go watch some of the Russo & Steele auction goings on. A very much more intimate auction setting than at Mecum's, but the hucksterism was at an equal level. Fast paced choreography and the auctioneer and master of ceremonies performed an excellent duet. Watch your wallet pocket when attending, but very fun to observe.

Saturday, drove off to the track for a day of racing. Our paddock pass afforded us one of the few entries to the main gate (all plebeians were diverted to other gates leading to parking in the dry grass/dirt). Consequently, we experienced absolutely no traffic and just drove up to the track and into our paddock parking spot without a single stop-and-go incident. An amazing and unique experience in all my visits to Laguna Seca for a race weekend. We had a fantastic day touring the paddock, sampling the grandstands and camping out in the dirt at the base of the corkscrew. I spent some time during the 20 minute races trying to teach Jennifer (a car ignoramus-couldn't differentiate between a Porsche 356 bathtub and a Ferrari GTO) how to recognize each brand of car. By the end of a race after the cars had come around 10 times she was getting pretty good, but if I tested her a half hour later she didn't have a clue. Don't mention it to her, but I think she's retarded. LOL! We met up with Glenn wandering around the vendor displays, and later sat with him in the grandstands. Turns out that only 8 cobras showed up in the corral (there were more real ones in the paddock). While wandering the corral we ran into a 1930s Morgan +4 owner who informed me that with its unique sliding axles, his Morgan was quicker in the corners than any other car and could take a 90 degree corner at 75 mph. I didn't have the heart to pop his bubble and inform him that I drove a cobra with five times the tire and six times the horsepower as his car and that he was full of crap on so many levels. Yes, I know what you're thinking: "That Rick is such a warm and sensitive guy". After the races, we hung around the paddock to let the crowds dissipate and had an absolutely traffic free drive back into Monterey for another fine repast (totally surreal to have no traffic in this situation).

On Sunday morning we packed up very early and experienced yet another traffic free drive through 17 mile drive to our ocean side parking and shuttle bus trip to the show ground. The three hundred show cars were absolutely stunning and I had yet another Zelig experience meeting and getting my picture taken with various celebrities (see pics). Both Jennifer's and my favorite car was a stunning black 1936 Jaguar SS100 (the stylized "SS" badge appeared to fall out of favor after WWII-I wonder why). As has been my experience all along this trip, after a while of viewing extraordinarily beautiful things, your mind just can't appreciate any more, and we were ready to take off after looking at the last car. Jennifer is an avid golf aficionado (albeit new to the sport), so she just had to get a picture of herself with the 18<sup>th</sup> green and ocean as a backdrop. As I was taking her picture, I looked down and saw the contents of a billfold on the ground. There was a license (Canadian), credit card, Marriot hotel key card, and \$221. I picked them up and we headed off to security to turn them in. Since we had only paid \$225 to see the show, we were only part of the unwashed masses scum, and normally weren't allowed anywhere near "The Lodge at Pebble Beach" where all the hoity toity well-dressed aristocrats were allowed. However, with my lost billfold contents in hand, we were directed to the front desk where the lost and found articles are held. The young lady at the counter informed me three times (when I just didn't believe her) that their policy is to hold articles for 3 months, then destroy them if unclaimed. I asked her why they just couldn't use the info on the license to either contact the owner or even just stick the items in an envelope and mail them to him, whereupon she just repeated "the policy". Onlookers were equally as incredulous as Jennifer and I. We decided that "the policy" was a joke and wasn't going to work.

Retarded Jennifer had the great idea to contact the Marriott and see if we could locate our guy that way. The Marriott operator recognized the owner's name and let loose the fact that he was part of the traveling Mercedes team. Mercedes is the principal sponsor of this year's Concours, and after I got off the phone there were three guys from Mercedes standing right there. Ultimately, we were taken to the traveling manager, who recognized her team member's name, so we handed off our found items. She asked if we would accept entry into their hospitality area as a reward for our honesty and diligence, and I gracefully answered that we would accept anything they'd like to give us. Escorted to the hospitality area and properly anointed with the unobtainium wrist band, we now had free reign to "The Lodge"! Jennifer and I then enjoyed several hours of a sumptuous buffet lunch (with china, linen, and silver), while comfortably ensconced on the patio under an umbrella covered table front and center relative to the show reviewing stand and the 18<sup>th</sup> green. We decided that it must be nice to be rich and privileged, and had an excellent conversation with the manager of the Eugene Oregon Mercedes dealer and his wife. After talking to him, Eugene is now my preferred location to check out for an eventual move. I asked him if when I move to Eugene he would give me a good deal on a Mercedes, and he informed me that "purchasing a Mercedes is not simply a financial transaction, but a lifestyle choice." Excellent comeback and we all had a good laugh! Well, all good things must come to an end, so Jennifer and I headed off for our drive down coast highway and handed off our wrist bands to some random lucky couple we saw on the way out (share the good fortune!).

We had another easy exit and headed down the coast, driving in and out of the marine layer until eventually hitting gorgeous sunshine. As always, there were the inevitable slow poker motorhomes and vans disobeying the numerous "slower traffic use turnout" signs, but in each case I ultimately blasted by long columns of cars (what does that double solid line in the middle of the road mean again?) and was able to experience extended periods of traffic free twisty turny fun. At one viewpoint atop a high cliff, was surrounded by a group of Aussie's experiencing a 5 week rented Harley Davidson journey around the Western US. I got into a lengthy technical discussion with their vocal leader about the car and by the end of it we were surrounded by the usual gaggle of spectators, many of whom had eyes spinning in opposite directions as they hadn't a clue regarding what language we were speaking. I got a laugh when I asked them "any more questions?" Of course, all (no doubt many envious) eyes were on us when Jennifer and I belted up and blasted off down the road. "It's good to be the king!"

We eventually arrived at Morro Bay, where we spent the night at forum member Rick (CRZN 427) and Sharyn's house. Rick is a retired engineer, having worked for a large engineering firm building many large projects (dams, Alaska pipeline, power plants...) and it shows in his car. He is nearing the end of a ten year off and on project constructing a Mark I. It certainly shows, as you will not believe the number of modifications and add-ons he has applied to his car. I couldn't begin to list them and I won't, just wait several months for his graduation post. I have never seen nor read about any car with anything close to the number of mods he has incorporated, all precisely engineered with great detail. Once again, I come away with the impression that we builders (and I use the term "we" very loosely as applied to myself) are an incredibly talented can-do bunch! Rick, Jennifer, and I went off to a great dinner by the bay, before returning home to chat while waiting for Sharyn to return home from her star acting performance in a local version of Neil Simon's Odd Couple, female version. She played "Olive", the female "Oscar" role as the slob. Upon her return, we talked some more and then had a slice of her justifiably famous Peach Pie, fresh from the oven. Yum!! We then all headed off to our respective bedrooms and crashed for the night. The next morning, Jennifer and I gave a hearty thanks to our hosts,

and then headed off early for an uneventful and beautiful drive down to Santa Barbara. I dropped Jennifer off at her UCSB Professor brother's place, both agreeing that we had a great weekend, and I headed off to my next stop, lunch with a coworker in Camarillo. Susan and I had a nice lunch (Mexican, of course) and caught up on our past several decades. It was nice to see that she's doing great, likes her job, and enjoys her family (they spend a lot of weekends parked on the beach in their trailer chilling). As I dropped her off, she reminded me that I had the option of driving over the mountains to the beach, which I gratefully took. Cresting Kanan Canyon Road, had a glorious view of the glistening Pacific. Drove down Pacific Coast Highway past Malibu and Santa Monica and had a traffic free drive to my old house in Mar Vista to spend a few days with former roommate Ron and his wife Susan. Holy cow, Ron has since gutted and replaced the entire interior and put in a fantastic pool/spa/waterfall in the side yard. Absolutely unrecognizable slice of paradise in place of the crap-hole we used to live in. Once again, I want to stay here forever. We spent a great couple of hours chatting and spa-ing as if we had seen each other only yesterday, the way great friends can just pick up like there had been no interruption. Susan came home from work (someone has to do that!) and we went out to dinner at one of our old neighborhood haunts (a Mexican restaurant-quelle surprise!) and had a great dinner full of long ago experienced but still very familiar tastes. Spent another nice interlude in the Jacuzzi before calling it a night.

This morning, did some more swimming and spa-ing, before heading out for lunch (what, Mexican again?) with Ron and a former co-worker Lorrie. I met Lorrie the same day I met my wife Constance (January 13, 1982), the first day I started work at Northrop (which later became Northrop Grumman). Constance and Lorrie shared a cubicle. After several weeks of talking to them and being myself, Lorrie asked me "have you ever worked with women before?" I interpreted this as her being very impressed with my repartee, and apparently Constance was just offended enough to eventually agree to be my wife. LOL

I'll spend the next several days visiting old friends and hopefully getting in touch with some local forum members, checking out the Peterson Automobile Museum and other sites, before heading south to see other friends. Until the next update.....