

A Speedy Escape!

The Porsche Club of America's (PCA) annual Escape event was held at the Sun Peaks Resort north of Kamloops, B.C. from Sept 9 to 12, 2010 and organized and hosted by the PCA Canada West Region here in Vancouver. With close to 400 participants and 200 cars coming from all over North America, it turned out to be the biggest Porsche event ever held in Canada.

Prior to the event, I asked Henry if he was intending to attend. Henry and I have kept in touch ever since he stored two IM examples in my garage in Calgary to display at the Calgary Auto Show. He indicated that, due to previous business and family commitments, he may not be able to make it, so I offered to drive one of his cars to show it off. He thought that he may have a 2004 dark blue/ red 1957 Speedster for me to drive, and that he'd call me on the Monday before I left.

I didn't hear anything from Henry for a couple of weeks, but the phone rang as promised on the Monday. Henry said the car was all tuned up, shiny, and ready to go! I was all set to take my 1983 911 SC Euro Coupe but thought that –well, if Henry is insisting, just this once – I'd take the Speedster!

We set off early on Wednesday from Vancouver, travelled west to Hope, northwest up the Fraser Canyon to Cache Creek, across to Kamloops and then north to Sun Peaks. Although we had the top down, the weather was bright, crisp and sunny, but seasonally cool - so we bundled up and took advantage of the nice flow of heat that a real early 50's Speedster would never have had! With the top down, streamlined windshield, and side windows wound up we found the wind noise and turbulence was minimal.

The drive to Sun Peaks is about 5 hours or so, and a lot of it is on twisty, smooth, not heavily travelled back mountain roads. This is absolute heaven for a fast paced jaunt in the little Speedster.

This particular specimen from Henry's Intermeccanica stable is powered by a 2.3 litre CB Performance air cooled Type 1 engine which displaces about 165 hp. With the transmission mated to a close ratio 901 style gearbox, and a growling set of headers and stinger pipe, this set up provides more than enough ponies to propel this little beauty along at cruising speeds – shall we say – far beyond the suggested speed limit. It also sports a few modern comfortable conveniences that the original Speedsters never had. Although the seats are original Speedster dimensions, they are more than adequately comfortable for someone who is 6'1", like myself, on a long trip.

The car is a phenomenally capable driving machine and seems at home at high speed. And, it is just as happy devouring tight sweeping corners without the need for substantial deceleration. In short, its rock solid with nearly zero body roll and very limited oversteer in both the long, high speed radius corners, and short choppy turns. I can say this without hesitation - it handles substantially better than my early 911 and has no "bump steer" effects to deal with. Sad, ain't it!

On Friday of the event I led a tour through the winding high hill country around Kamloops, the Nicola Valley, Merritt, Logan Lake and Lac le Jaune. What an absolute blast! The Speedster had no problem keeping up with and, in some cases, outpacing the 911's and Caymans in the corners – and even on the straights. It caused its flashy cousins to pay attention.

Now, I would never, ever argue that this particular Speedster may be quicker than a red 86 930 Slantnose Turbo in the straights, especially when those monsters take off like spooked fire spitting cheetahs, but when you're chasing one with the license plate "Hot VW" through 20 miles of winding uphill to Sun Peaks, and you keep pace in all the corners, it makes you wonder, doesn't it?



On the Saturday of the event the Show and Shine attracted 130 cars. At the banquet that evening, it was announced that the little blue Speedster had won the People's Choice award - and a nice glass trophy to go with it! We couldn't believe it!

The drive home on Sunday was nothing but heavy rain, more rain and then some rain. Did I say rain? Because we had the top up, and although somewhat steamy inside, the car took on a surprisingly small amount of water. This was mostly evident at the rear of the doors where the top meets the door, and down the side of the windshield frame and front door posts. And, it is worth mentioning that the snug fitting top makes virtually no wind noise.

But, hey, Speedster weren't really meant to be driven through 5 hours of slashing mountain rainstorms, were they?

The little Speedster didn't miss a beat all weekend. It just kept coming back for more!

Congratulations to Intermeccanica for winning the People's Choice award – and a personal thanks to Henry for allowing me to experience the long distance quality ride that an Intermeccanica custom coach built car provides!

Steve Warner

PCA Canada West Region (Vancouver) – former Tour and Event Chair
PCA Wild Rose Region (Calgary) – former Tour and Event Chair
Porsche 356 Registry Member



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