

ARIZONA DRIVER

THE ENTHUSIAST'S GUIDE TO LIFE BEHIND THE WHEEL

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THE 19TH ANNUAL COPPERSTATE 1000 ROAD RALLY

PLUS... BOB BONDURANT DRIVES HIS ORIGINAL SHELBY DAYTONA COBRA COUPE AFTER 40 YEARS

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MUSEUM PIECES IN MOTION

THE 19TH ANNUAL BELL LEXUS COPPERSTATE 1000 ROAD RALLY

BY LARRY EDSALL

PHOTOS BY LARRY EDSALL AND RANDALL BOHL



Photo: Larry Edsall

Can you imagine someone buying a Picasso or a Rembrandt, or one of those expensive antique artifacts of furniture we see on *Antiques Roadshow*, and then taking it on a camping trip where it's exposed to the dangers of weather, and is under only as much security as can be provided by the zipper that closes a tent's flaps?

Of course not. Such works of art are kept secure behind locked doors, whether in private homes or in closely guarded art museums.

Well, not quite always, because the owners of some works of art eagerly expose them to the elements. Take, for example, the artwork owned and put at risk by Martin Gruss, who in August of 2007 bid \$4.95 million to buy the 1959 Ferrari 250 GT California Spyder roadster that made its debut back in 1959 by finishing fifth in the 24 Hours of Le Mans auto race.

Such valuable works of automotive art usually are kept hidden away in someone's garage, brought out only to be delivered by closed trailer for showing at a

prestigious concours d'élegance or, perhaps, loaned to a museum for a special exhibition, such as the Curves of Steel show two years ago at the Phoenix Art Museum.

And yet here we are, standing in the bright, early-morning sunlight in the parking lot of a hotel on the busy main road through Sedona, and here's Martin Gruss, cleaning the windshield of his cherished Ferrari, getting the car spiffed up and ready for the third of a four-day, 1000-mile driving tour on Arizona highways and byways.

"I wouldn't want a car unless I could drive it," Gruss responds when asked about risking such an investment in the traffic of the open road.

In fact, he adds, living in New York, he doesn't really get to drive this Ferrari "as much as it deserves to be driven."

Besides, Gruss smiles, the car is almost ready for "a paint job," a process done not at your local Earl Scheib franchise but by experienced classic car restoration specialists. Knowing such people can

deal with a paint chip here or there, Gruss plans to follow up his tour of Arizona by running his car around the famed Road America racetrack in Wisconsin during a national Ferrari owners gathering this summer.

Gruss' attitude, that cars were meant to be driven, is shared by other automotive enthusiasts and collectors who have brought their cherished chariots to join Gruss on the 19th Copperstate 1000 vintage sports car rally, an event staged each spring by the Men's Arts Council of the Phoenix Art Museum.

The MAC was founded in 1968 to get men to volunteer to provide night security watch over the museum. Since then, MAC has grown to become the largest annual financial contributor to the museum, each year staging a Cowboy Artists of America exhibition and sale; VinArte, the art of wine tasting, dinner and sale; and the Copperstate 1000 rally, which carries title sponsorship from the Bell Lexus auto dealership with additional support from AAA Arizona, the Arizona Department of

Driver Rick Rome's image is reflected in the rear view mirror of his 1957 Jaguar Cozzi Special as he drives south from Sedona toward Jerome.

Martin Gruss (right) preps his \$4.95 million 1959 Ferrari 250 GT California Spyder roadster for another day on the open road.

The Field of Dreams exhibit at Tempe Diablo Stadium is open to the public and whets everyone's appetites for the trip ahead.

After a brief optional stop in Superior, lunch at Roosevelt Lake is the first chance for participants to compare notes on the performance of their priceless steeds, and on the beautiful weather.

Public Safety, *Arizona Highways* magazine, E.D. Marshall Jewelers, artist Ed Mell, Meguiar's car care products, U-Haul, Winston Churchill Cigars, and the Phoenix Art Museum itself.

Each year, MAC accepts 60-70 automotive classics for the Copperstate 1000 rally, with each of those vehicles' owners paying around \$5000 for the privilege of running, and risking, their cars on the open roads of the great Southwest. Though all of the 2009 Copperstate 1000 was staged on Arizona highways, the event has visited Nevada, Utah and New Mexico as well in recent years.

In addition to the driving, Copperstate participants enjoy catered lunches in some exotic locales and stay in multi-star lodging along the route.

This year, as it has in recent years, the Copperstate begins with the Field of Dreams car show at Tempe Diablo Stadium, spring training home of the Los Angeles Angels major league baseball team. The Copperstate cars are arrayed around the edge of the baseball outfield, with local car clubs showing their cars in the stadium parking lots, and with a special collection of classic Rolls-Royce and Bentleys parked on the stadium mezzanine.

On Sunday morning, April 5, the cars begin to follow what this year measures out into a 1010-mile route that takes them east from Phoenix, past the Superstition Mountains and up through the Devil's Canyon before turning northwest to lunch on the shores of a Roosevelt Lake so full of water that saguaro on what used to be well back from the shoreline appear to be growing out of the water.

After lunch, the drive resumes, through



Field of Dreams and two Roosevelt Lake group photos: Randall Bohll - Ferrari and Roosevelt Lake bridge photos: Larry Edsall



Bill and Karen Clements make the climb from Superior to Devil's Canyon in their 1954 Mercedes-Benz 22A cabriolet.

Painted Desert County Park near Winslow provides the backdrop for a view of Roland Duce's 1959 Aston Martin DB3S as seen over the hood of Stephen Norman's 1929 Bentley 4 1/2-liter drophead coupe.

While Rick and Nancy Rome are at lunch, their 1957 Jaguar Cozzi Special, a car constructed more than 50 years ago by teenager Dan Cozzi with neighbors and friends, waits for another run down the road.

Payson and on along the shores of Mormon and the Lake Marys to Flagstaff for the night.

William Clements has missed only two Copperstate 1000s, though for the inaugural event he was driving the luggage truck that shuttles the participants' suitcases from overnight stop to overnight stop, not one of his collector cars.

The Phoenix resident's collection includes a 1941 Packard four-door convertible, an unrestored 1967 Mercedes-Benz 250SL with 120,000 miles on its odometer, and the 1954 Mercedes-Benz 220A convertible he and his wife, Karen, drive on the Copperstate this year after a two-year absence (in 2007 the car wasn't quite ready and last year the Clementses were busy with activities leading up to their daughter's wedding).

The Copperstate contingent faces its longest driving day on Monday, a 300-mile route that takes them east and north from Flagstaff across the Painted Desert to Old Oraibi on Third Mesa, believed to be the oldest continuously occupied settlement in North America. The route then turns south to Winslow, and a turn past Standing on the Corner statue just before lunch at the historic and restored La Posada Hotel. Arizona 87 then leads the cars across the desert and into the Blue Ridge forest and a descent into the Verde Valley before twisting through Page Springs to Sedona.

Martin Gruss' Ferrari was one of only 41 such long-wheelbase California Spyders ever created, but while not nearly as valuable, the car driven on the tour by Rick Rome truly is one of a kind. The car is the 1957 Jaguar Cozzi Special, built by a teenaged Dan Cozzi and a hot-rodder neighbor, who somehow got California coachbuilder Jack Hagemann to form the car's aluminum bodywork.

Cozzi and his friends built the car, but his father wouldn't let him race it, so driver Nadeau Bourgeault was recruited. The car made its competitive debut with a third-place behind a Ferrari driven by Carroll Shelby and a D-type Jaguar. Later, the car won its class and was sixth overall in a race that featured Shelby in a Maserati, Jack Graham's Aston Martin DB3S, John von Neumann's Ferrari 500TR, and Ritchie Ginther in a Porsche 550 Spyder.

Cozzi would go on to be a successful engineer who worked for a time for a Formula One racing team, but his car, which he sold to help pay for college, was hidden away in a mechanic's garage for 25 years until it was rediscovered.

Tuesday morning the Copperstate cars leave Sedona for a sensational and sinuous drive up and over Mingus Mountain

KEEP RIGHT >>



Photos: Larry Edsall



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Cars (top) approach a scenic overlook after the first portion of their climb up Mingus Mountain. Later in the day, they stop for lunch at an airplane museum in Valle.

William Hammerstein's 1958 Mercedes-Benz 300SL roadster drives past Humphreys Peak (below). David Sydorick's 1961 Aston Martin DB4 GT Zagato (bottom) was voted the car most competitors would want in their own garage.



Photos: Larry Edsall

behind the old mining-community-turned-artist-colony of Jerome. The cars then zip across the Prescott and Chino valleys to a short sprint on Interstate 40 and a brief drive on a section of old historic Route 66 through Williams before turning north toward the Grand Canyon.

Though the route stops miles before the canyon, at the Valle crossroads, the lunch stop is a remarkable venue in its own right, the Planes of Fame Air Museum, which, it turns out, not only has a collection of vintage aircraft but also a dozen or more classic cars. Among the museum's fleet is a 1929 Ford Tri-Motor that took Copperstate participants aloft for a view of the Grand Canyon.

After lunch and flights, the Copperstate crowd returns to the road, heading toward Humphreys Peak and Flagstaff, then dropping down into Oak Creek Canyon and back to Sedona for another night.

Martin Gruss is one of 13 drivers participating for the first time on the Copperstate 1000. So is David Sydorick, who bought his 1961 Aston Martin DB4 GT Zagato in 2000. A few years later, a car similar to Sydorick's sold at auction for \$2.7 million, and Sydorick's car is even more special; it was built for the 1961 Turin (Italy) motor show and thus was equipped with several special features.

Before Sydorick bought the car, its previous owner had kept it parked for 31 years. Not Sydorick. He's driven in the Goodwood Festival of Speed in England, displayed it at the Villa de Este concours in Italy, and drives it every Sunday morning in Los Angeles, and after the Copperstate tour plans on participating in a similar 1000-mile event this fall in Colorado.

At the conclusion of the Copperstate, several awards are given, including one voted on by the participants. That award goes to the car they'd "kill to own." This year, that car is Sydorick's Aston.

The rally's final day takes the participants through the red rock formations around Sedona, then briefly down Interstate 17 before turning back across Prescott, Skull, Kirkland and Peeples valleys to lunch at Hidden Springs Ranch, and then down the Yarnell Grade through Wickenburg and back to Phoenix, for dinner and eager anticipation of next year's 20th anniversary Copperstate 1000. ■

After working as a sports editor for daily newspapers in Michigan, **LARRY EDSALL** was on staff for 12 years at *AutoWeek*, most of it as managing editor. He has driven more than half a million miles testing cars on four continents. He helped launch www.izoom.com and also helped found PAPA, the Phoenix Automotive Press Association. His books include *Masters of Car Design (Genius)*, *Miata 20 Years* and his eleventh, *Camaro: A Legend Reborn*, all available at amazon.com.



TOURING WITH THE OLDIES IN A BRAND-NEW HONDA INSIGHT

BY LARRY EDSALL

I thought I'd be disappointed in the 2010 Honda Insight. But over the course of four days and 1000 miles, the car changed my mind.

I'd driven the new 2010 Toyota Prius a few days before taking the new 2010 Insight on the Copperstate 1000 rally. The Prius is a marvel. My co-driver and I had averaged 60 miles per gallon without really trying in a car that is full of all the latest technological marvels, including a solar sun roof that provides power to vent hot air from the car's interior when it's parked in summer sun.

And the Prius can operate, can move down the road, at least briefly, without using any gasoline. The Prius is a full hybrid, which means its gas/electric powertrain is set up to run on battery power at low speeds – in parking lots or when pulling away from a stop sign or light.

Honda, however, does mild rather than full hybrids, using the electric motor and battery pack more as a supplemental power source that supports rather than supplants the internal combustion engine. Thus the Insight moves only when that engine is running.

As I said, I anticipated being unimpressed, and more so when I saw how much the new Insight looks like the old Prius. We'd better get used to this fish-like shape, the result of wind tunnel sculpting to achieve the most aerodynamic form that will carry four adults and some luggage down the highway.

The Insight I drove was the EX version; base price \$21,300. There's also a \$19,800 (base) LX or, for \$23,100, an EX with a navigation system.

The non-nav EX comes with paddle shifters on the steering wheel, 15-inch alloy wheels, vehicle stability control, heated mirrors with turn signal indicators, a center console with storage, cruise control and a 160-watt audio system with six speakers and portable music device interface.

All 2010 Insights have anti-lock brakes, tire-pressure monitors, automatic climate controls, power windows/locks/mirrors, 60/40 split and folding rear seat, tilt and telescoping steering column, 160-watt audio system with four speakers, a backlit multi-information display and Honda's Integrated Motor Assist powertrain with 1.3-liter four-cylinder engine, electric motor/battery pack and continuously variable transmission.

Honda says the new Insight is a car for "...everyone with a left brain. And a right foot."

The federal government certifies the new Insight at 40 miles per gallon in city driving and at 43 on the highway. Where the right foot comes in is a Sport button that maximizes power output and optimizes gearing for things such as climbing the Pinals or scaling Mingus, or simply for merging onto a fast-moving freeway.

A couple of years ago, I was sentenced to a week in a Honda Civic Hybrid, which I drove from Phoenix to Flagstaff and back on

Interstate 17. With the underpowered Civic, I had no choice but to tuck in behind those big, barely moving semis and hope I could keep up on the long mountain grades. With the Insight, I simply punched the Sport button and shot around the trucks.

For those who are both left-brained and left-footed, there's also an ECO mode button to help you sip fuel as efficiently as possible. A variety of information system displays encourage you to drive efficiently. On one, you earn leaves and can even build a flowering plant for fuel-efficient driving.

I earned lots of leaves, though my plant never flowered. I simply drove the car, used the air conditioning as comfort dictated (at a stoplight, the gasoline engine shuts off to save fuel but thanks to the electric motors the air conditioning keeps blowing cold air), and I engaged Sport mode whenever I felt the need. Nonetheless, I filled the fuel tank three times, averaging 40.2, 46.6 and 47.3 mpg.

I'm confident I would have gotten even better figures in a Prius, and could have matched the Insight numbers in something like a Volkswagen Jetta clean diesel, a car that would have been much more fun to drive for the enthusiast driver. But my point in this paragraph is not to dis the Insight but to point out that automakers are starting to offer us a variety of cars that are fuel efficient and fun to drive.

Pardon the pun, but my experience on the Copperstate was most insightful. ■