

Aloha: A Joint Drive with the Big Island Club



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Several members of our Region recently traveled west – way west – to join the Big Island Club for a long-anticipated joint drive on the island of Hawaii. This collaboration had been in the works for several years, and while our Oregon contingent was small, we were warmly welcomed and had a truly wonderful time.

Like our own tours, the morning began with a pre-drive social—though with a few island twists. The start time, for instance, was refreshingly relaxed. We gathered around 10:00 a.m., and the safety briefing began at 10:30. I especially appreciated the chance to sip coffee slowly while Sue enjoyed a little extra rest and a short fifteen-minute drive to our starting point.

After introductions and some lively conversation, our tour leader, Gunner, founder of the Big Island Club, surprised us with an





unexpected announcement—it happened to be the 70th Anniversary of the Porsche Club of America. Gunner's family has a deep history with PCA: his father was an early photographer for Porsche USA, and his mother modeled in some of the brand's first American advertisements. The two families - Gunner's and Porsche's - vacationed together, and his father even drove Ferry Porsche to his very first U.S. Parade. That kind of living history is simply captivating.

Our drive unfolded differently from any I've experienced. I volunteered to serve as Sweep, and Gunner seemed pleased that someone stepped forward so readily. Sweep, as many of you know, is every bit as important as the lead position—sometimes more so. Gunner handed me a powerful radio with a magnetic antenna, which I mounted easily on the trunk of my rented convertible. I even snapped a photo for our Oregon tour team to study later. Then he handed me a red flag to complement his green one.

Our communication plan was simple but ingenious. As Sweep, I entered the highway first, pulling into a wide turnout that Gunner had



pre-selected. Once all cars were assembled, we used our flags for visual confirmation before merging back onto the road together. The system worked beautifully—an innovation worth sharing with our own tour leaders.

We began in Waikoloa Village, climbing the Old Saddle Road, a beautifully twisting route that rises from 1,500 feet to nearly 6,500 feet just below Mauna Kea. After a break and a bit of roadside mechanical teamwork on a finicky blue 914, we prepared for the descent. When the 914 refused to start, one of the members and I gave it a classic push-start, proof that older cars still teach us useful skills modern ones can't. Sometimes, older really is better.

With everyone safely regrouped, I raised the red flag, Gunner raised the green, and we began the long, winding drive down toward Kona. Along the way, Gunner narrated local history and pointed out places of interest via radio. We eventually reached the Old Kona Airport Park, where we gathered under the pavilions beside the ocean and shared pizza and dessert - courtesy of our generous Big Island hosts.

Though the Big Island Club is much smaller than ours, their enthusiasm, hospitality, and sense of community rival any Region I've encountered. They hold their "arrive and drives" on the first Saturday of each month, and I'm confident they would welcome future visitors. For the record, a Mustang convertible kept pace with the Porsches just fine—proof that community sometimes matters more than horsepower.

I hope this is the first of many shared adventures with our Hawaiian friends. The roads are spectacular, the spirit is genuine, and—as with all good drives—the best memories come from the people who make them possible.

Until our next visit, may the Big Island Club continue to thrive and enjoy every mile of their magnificent island roads. ■

