



Beginner Drive Introduction: A Tale of Two Dads

BY STEVE WOOD
PHOTOS BY STEVE AND TAYLOR WOOD

Bull Run Bridge parking while we stretched our legs.

I have recently rejoined ORPCA after a 7-year absence, and upon scrolling through the events calendar, I stopped at the June 16th Beginner Drive Introduction. I have been on Porsche drives before, both in southern Oregon and here with Oregon Region. I wasn't exactly a beginner,

but then I noticed that the Drive fell on Father's Day. What a great opportunity to reconnect with my middle daughter Taylor. She's been so busy lately creating her latest video game, that we don't spend that much quality

Many of us even brought umbrellas. As we both walked up to the group assembled in the parking lot, everyone was huddled in a circle around one couple - who I believed were holding a teacup dog. I initially thought 'how nice is this, they brought their little dog.' I wanted to get a photo of it with my Nikon, knowing I was writing a story for Anzeiger magazine. But, upon entering the circle I realized it wasn't a dog at all, but a tiny 6-week-old baby girl named Laurel. Wow!

My three daughters have been grown, and on their own for so long, I had forgotten that humans could be so small and helpless. It was at that moment I realized that parenthood's journey goes by in an instant. I wanted to tell Trevor Pielstick - the baby's father, "Enjoy raising Laurel, these experiences you are living through go by so fast, they're fleeting."

All my old memories came flooding back, dealing with the trials and tribulations of raising three daughters. I realized that I wished that I could have frozen time back then, so I could fully

time together. So, I texted her. "Hey, let's go on a Father's Day drive with the Porsche club," and happily she said "Yes."

When Taylor and I arrived at the Lewis and Clark State Recreational Area near Troutdale, the weather was cold.



Our starting point.



Ready to start.

appreciate the experience. But as a parent you are so immersed in the milieu of raising children, you sometimes don't take the time to enjoy what's happening right before your eyes. Here we were, two fathers, Trevor and myself, standing on the same ground where Meriwether Lewis and William Clark stood in 1805 - over 200 years ago. The two explorers were nearing the end of their incredible journey across the continent - an unbelievable task back then. That expedition would be extreme even today.

According to the park signage, they still found time to reflect upon their achievements, and their love for this young nation. Trevor and I had similarly been brought together, by the love we have for our daughters. With the catalyst being, the admiration we both shared for the storied car brand of Porsche.

As we left the parking lot and headed out on our own journey, I ruminated how grateful we should all be! We essentially have the privilege of driving race cars through the city streets any

day, anytime we want. Something I don't ever want to take for granted. Most drives start with the cars traveling through the city for a while, and then gradually the landscape turns more remote. But what struck me immediately is that we were into the tall trees right away. Giant firs and immense cedars towered overhead, as we traveled down small two-lane roads.

As the terrain changed again, small meadows, fields, and lush valleys came into view. Following each other, our German race cars held mastery of the asphalt. Remote mountain homes jumped up occasionally, only to be followed by pastoral scenes framed with idyllic wildflowers.

We were held accountable once or twice by 'road work.' It split up our group - as interlopers in regular 'common cars' infiltrated our small line. Kurt Fuerstenau (our fearless leader) stopped by the side of the road, and we were all able to quickly come together.

When our tiny Porsche parade began twisting through the forest once again,

Enjoy the photos. There are a few more on our SmugMug site: <https://orpca-pix.smugmug.com/2024-ORPCS-EVENTS/Beginner-Drive-6162024>



Kurt Fuerstenau leading the discussion at the start of the drive.



Porsches galore.



Bull Run River

we were all humbled by the magnificence of nature. After sweeping through one seemingly innocuous turn, we were amazed by the magic of the Bull Run River. It's part of the Bull Run watershed which provides the city of Portland, and many other surrounding regions with their pure drinking water. Our little group pulled over to the side, to stretch our legs. Unfortunately, my daughter had

become a bit queasy from my driving. I swear, I was doing my best to straighten out the curves, but they simply weren't cooperating. Natalie Pielstick, the mother of 6-week-old Laurel, had some Jolly Rancher hard candy in her purse. She quickly gave one to Taylor, to sooth my

daughter's aching stomach. Funny thing - Natalie had learned how to be a great mother in just 6-short-weeks. She knew to always have snacks, candies, wipes etc. in her purse at all times. With her as a mother, Laurel is going to grow up just fine.

Our group then walked across the Bull Run Bridge to get a better view of the rushing water. This bridge, which spans the tributary, has a quiet beauty all its own, its green-painted steel pillars offering a quant overlook to the river's churning flow. In the distance, one can see the white poles of the Bull Run River

kayak slalom course, used by many local enthusiasts. Then we were off again, twisting through thickly forested, and then open country roads. The vistas were delightful, with firs looming in the distance. Taylor (as navigator) dutifully checked off our progress as we made our way down the route list. To each road we were on, she gave a mark. As a thoughtful and loving

father, I had provided her with an old clipboard, to make her task less burdensome. Yes, I am that good of a dad.

My Porsche effortlessly continued, following our merry band of adventurers, with Taylor checking off the miles, the stops, the left turns, and right turns. I do visit her more frequently than my other daughters, only because since she's her own boss -

being an online music teacher, and video game composer and developer, she has some off-hours to spend with her old man. We go jogging once a week, catching up on family happenings, movies, and politics. We were deep in one such discussion, when through no fault of my own, we blasted right past one of the left turns, or was it a right turn, I can't remember. There was a bit of lag, before Taylor realized what had happened. It seems that in my haste to catch up with the group, I had missed a turn, and we were now headed straight for Nowheresville.



Troutdale mural.

I had never before realized the power of the 'sweep' to follow and locate stragglers.



(Above) Dining at Ristorante Di Pompello. (Left) Trevor and Natalie Pielstick, with 6-week-old Laurel.

We traveled aimlessly through the forest for a moment, as I frantically contemplated what to do next, all the while casting ridiculous aspersions on my daughter's ability to navigate.



Then suddenly, in my rear-view mirror, a pair of tiny headlights appeared. As it got closer, (much to my delight,) I recognized the blue 911 from our morning safety briefing.

It was the 'sweep.' It had followed me through the intersection, as I traveled in the wrong direction, much as a mother duck follows one of her errant ducklings. I had never before realized the power of the 'sweep' to follow and locate stragglers. At this same moment, Taylor realized her mistake, which is fortunate because it certainly wasn't my mistake. You know - for driving too fast, and not paying attention to the road signs. At any rate, I waved to acknowledge the 'sweep' and we turned around and corrected her, I mean, my driving error.

As we caught up with the group, they were just entering Troutdale, a lovely place with a rich and varied history. You can see that past illustrated on a beautiful mural, painted on the side of a building near the city center.

Because of Kurt Fuerstenau's foresight, Ristorante Di Pompello (or in the vernacular for non-native Italian speakers - Pompello's restaurant,) was ready and waiting for us, ushering

our group quickly upstairs to a private room for our lunch. My daughter had the pesto pasta, and I had half of a fish sandwich with fries. Very delicious.

Sitting at our large communal dining table, I watched the Pielstick family, care, nurture and feed their tiny baby girl. I realized how true the Latin term *tempus fugit* is. Because time flies, it makes it even more important to rise above the day-to-day existence of life. To live for the moment, enjoy our children, and be truly happy. It all goes by in an instant. I vividly remember holding my 6-week-old daughter Taylor, in the same way Trevor is now holding Laurel. But that was 30 years ago.

I tried to make sense of the fleeting nature of time, but couldn't. However, I was sure of one thing. That at least for today, the Pielstick family and my family, had an experience to remember. And thank you, Taylor, for putting up with me for several hours – confined to a small German luxury car. ■