



From the River to the Mountain

STORY BY DANIEL MORRIS | PHOTOS BY DANIEL MORRIS AND ARNON KASETER

On a brisk October 23rd morning, 20 Porsche enthusiasts gathered in Scappoose, ready to embark on a midweek drive that would take them through nearly 100 miles of stunning Pacific Northwest scenery. The route promised over 7,500 vertical feet of elevation change, making it a perfect adventure for those who appreciate both driving and the beauty of nature.

Drivers and their navigators were greeted by a teasing autumn day - blue skies obscured by a foggy marine layer. Their destination was the Coldwater Ridge Visitors Center in neighboring Washington,

famed for its panoramic views of Mt. St. Helens. While the group held hope for clearing skies, the mountain unfortunately remained shrouded in clouds throughout the day.

What unfolded, however, was an experience that showcased nearly three and a half seasons of weather. We encountered everything from fleeting sunshine to thick fog, light rain, and even a hint of snow as temperatures dipped to 37 degrees at higher elevations. As we approached the Visitors Center at 3,200 feet, the chilly weather returned to a soft mist.

Our group of Porsches included models spanning



almost five decades, including three classic air-cooled 911s dating to 1975. As the owner of a 1979 SC Targa, I always appreciate the presence of these vintage gems; there's something special about the authenticity they bring to the drive. The group was filled out by modern water-cooled variants including Macans, Panameras, Boxsters, and Caymans.

We began our journey along Oregon Highway 30, crossing the Columbia River towards Longview, Washington. A quick stop at Sacajawea Park allowed us to briefly stretch our legs. The nearly three-mile-long park buzzed with activity as we watched young runners participate in a long-distance event, their attention occasionally diverted by the sight of our vehicles.

Departing Longview, we wound our way northwest through the scenic foothills, where light traffic allowed for an enjoyable meander on rural roads. Once we reached Castle Rock, we paused again alongside the picturesque Lewis River. Here, we took a moment to watch local fishermen casting lines in hopes of catching the fall salmon run.

The final leg of our drive took us up the Spirit Lake Highway, a route that has remained a favorite despite the tragic 1980 volcanic eruption that so drastically altered Mt. St. Helens' landscape. Arriving at the Visitors Center, operated by the National Park Service, we were reminded of the area's rich history and educational value. The facility does not require parking or visitor permits during the off-season, making it an ideal stop for our group.

Due to the inclement weather, we opted for an indoor picnic lunch. Surrounded by walls filled with stories and comments from past visitors, the atmosphere buzzed with conversation about the mountain, our shared love for Porsches, and technical discussions on models from the 993 to the 968 and 997.

Despite the clouds enveloping Mt. St. Helens, the light rain, and the occasional threat of snowflakes, the drive was a resounding success. Everyone left with smiles, eager to reconnect for future adventures. This midweek journey proved that the true joy of driving a Porsche is not just in the destination but in the experiences shared along the way. ■

