



# June Midweek Drive: From Forests to Falls, Fields to Farms

*Porsche driving line with a tree farm on the left.*

**BY STEVE WOOD | PHOTOS BY STEVE WOOD, ALLEGRA WOOD, AND JOE SWEENEY**

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**W**e gathered near the river. The sun reflects on the water. Bright streaks of light danced across shiny metal skin, accentuating the varied colors of the Porsches parked nearby. We arrived at 9:15 am at Clackamette Park, which is where the Willamette and Clackamas rivers merge in Oregon City.

As soon as my daughter Allegra and I got out of our car we could tell there was something different, something special in the air. All the white fluff ("Manna from Heaven"?) was everywhere. People think it's pollen but it's really seed-clusters from nearby Poplar and Cottonwood trees. It floats on the wind like snow, yet it was already 82 degrees in the shade.

We were split into two groups. Group One obviously leaving first, and then came the rest of us - departing soon thereafter. Daniel Morris organized the whole drive and was in charge of our group, flanked by his trusty sidekick Roy Johnson. These two are inseparable, and easy to spot since they both own

matching Racing Yellow (Speed Yellow has more orange in it) Cayman GT4's.

When it came time for our group to head out, I mentioned to my daughter that I was going to hang back, and not follow directly behind the two yellow Caymans. I wanted the obvious shot - of all the little Porsches lined up in unison going down the highway which Allegra (manning my Nikon) accurately captured. I can't stress enough how wonderful it is for me to spend the day with my youngest daughter, and how grateful I am to ORPCA for providing the venue to us.

We ducked under a shadowy overpass, blissfully cool air washing over our cars. As we left Oregon City, we picked up a few "common cars" trying to infiltrate our line. But the further out of town we got, the more those vehicles started to disappear. We were leaving civilization behind, now maneuvering our German machines down country roads instead. We passed through a 'one-horse' town that was having some sort of gathering. Locals





were lined up waiting to get into a local establishment. As we drove by, we could tell by their flummoxed expressions - that seeing so many Porsches together at one time, in one place, was something that didn't happen there very often. I think the other drivers wanted to sneak through quietly, arousing as little attention as possible, but I alternatively honked my horn, drawing even more curious stares. Onlookers waved and cheered, many taking out their iPhones to capture our parade.

With Mount Hood looming in the distance, we started to enter Christmas tree farm territory. I was amazed at the non-uniformity of the pines, ranging from tiny sprouts to trees over 40 feet tall. Allegra commented, "I get the small or medium Christmas trees. But who is buying the really tall ones?"

The undulating, twisting asphalt gradually gave way to the rustic town of Molalla - which means brushy prairie, or meadow-like land. This idyllic rural community was nestled deep within

the quiet splendor of its surrounding landscape. After many left, right, left, and right turns through the city streets we eventually arrived at the Molalla Public Library. Yes, this was our 'potty' stop, much to the chagrin of the ever-watchful librarians. They observed us with uneasy eyes, as we filed one-by-one into the small restrooms. Their demeanor told me, that they probably don't see a dozen members of a Porsche club show up at the same time to use the facilities. Tipping my hat as I left (as a gesture of thanks,) I still felt eyes upon me, as I walked out through the electric sliding glass door.

As we left Molalla, it didn't take long for the topography to change. In short order we found ourselves climbing again, as we made our way over narrow mountain roads. We were shaded by the dark forest canopy; the hot summer sun unable to reach us. Our cars were now in old-growth forests - filled with lush ferns, giant cedars, and thick underbrush. We were nearing Silver Falls State Park.

(Left) Participants meeting – Daniel Morris in the middle with the blue and gray vest. (Right) Jerome Deluz at the rest stop.

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(Above) Walk to the fall at Sliver Falls State Park. (Below) Rest Stop.



After we regrouped in the parking lot, Daniel told us we should pay the \$5.00 day-use fee, because even though we weren't going to be staying long, it is a good idea to support the Oregon State Parks. Daniel reminded us that the park system holds many marvelous outdoor activities throughout the year. Their programs cater to those who want to experience the great outdoors. Plus, nobody wanted to get a ticket from the ever-present park rangers. We then all got out of our cars and marched off toward South Falls, the closest and easiest to reach from the parking lot. It's just a quick five-minute walk, passing by restrooms, a restaurant, a gift shop, and even more restrooms. The Oregon Parks and Recreation Department really does know their customers.

The unique thing about this particular park is that it has 10 active waterfalls, each with its own character. You can walk directly under the turbulent waters, although we didn't, because of time constraints. As we walked back to our cars, my daughter and I overheard many tourists proclaiming, that they were going to complete the entire seven-mile loop of falls. What a grand day to do that feat, especially in this heat.

Back in the cars, we worked our way down from the steep mountains. Our group started to encounter endless farmlands. At every turn, there was a different field, and a different crop. I realized how much I missed Germany, because as one drives through Bavarian farmland, there are wooden signs telling passersby which crop is planted – usually its beer related -





*Mt. Hood.*

wheat, hops, or barley. However, with Oregon farmlands, I could only guess at what we were seeing. Some of the crops looked like wheat, potatoes, onions, alfalfa, hay, or garlic. There were also endless acres of wildflowers – white, purple, red, yellow.

We were warned during our safety briefing to “be careful”, that we might encounter farm machinery on the roads during this part of our journey. We did slow down once or twice waiting to pass tractors, which were also working their way down these same country roads. Sometimes we would hit a grand straightaway bordering newly-ploughed acreage. For the record I was not traveling 75 mph down a two-lane farm road next to an open field. But if I had, it would have been an exhilarating experience.

We then rounded a sharp corner and slowed down to a meager 35. As we drove through the corner, we spotted a white County-owned pickup truck parked on the right shoulder. A man wearing a fluorescent safety vest was talking on his cell phone. As he saw us pass, he immediately turned, and made the universal slow-down gesture with his left hand, moving it up and down. I quipped to Allegra, that he's probably calling his police buddies to meet us at the next intersection.

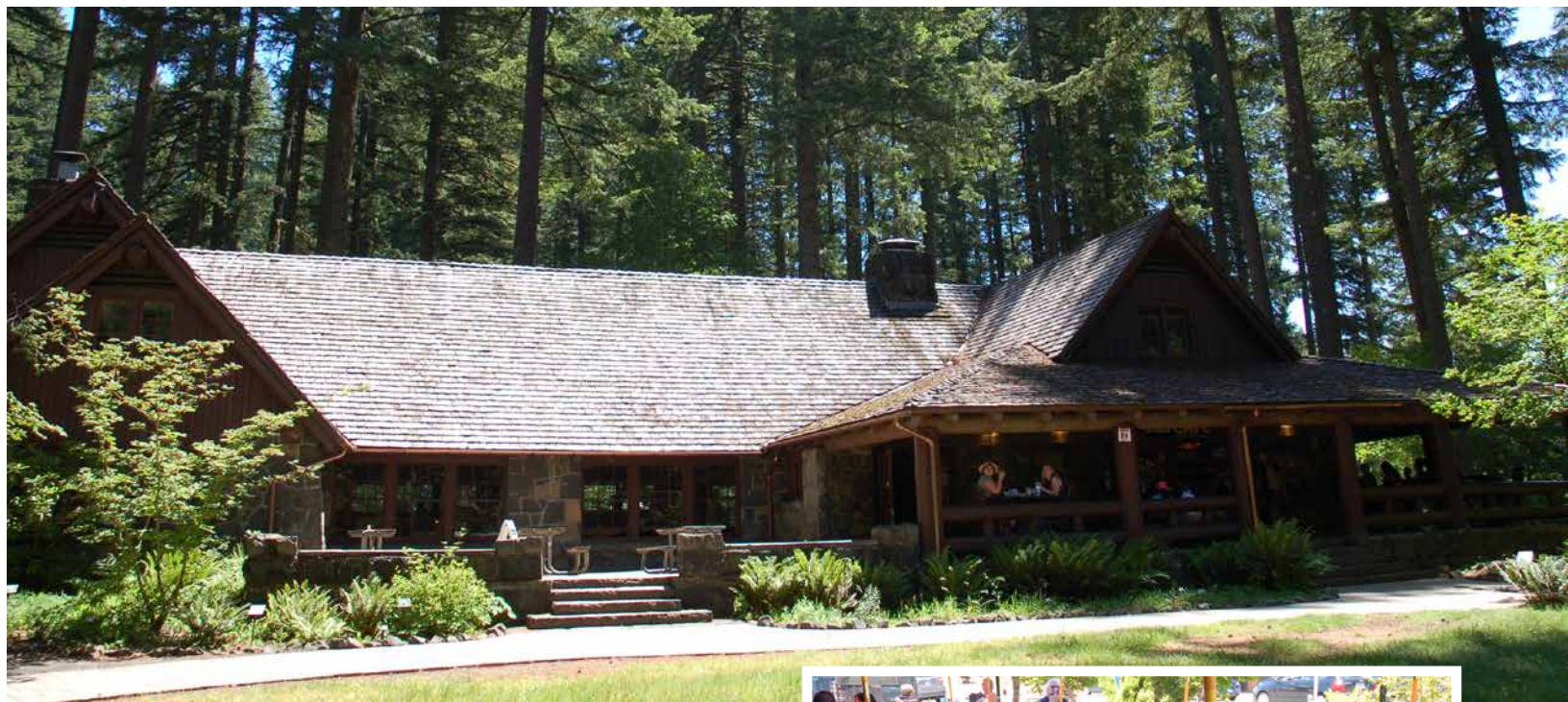
Thankfully, at the next intersection, there were

no police. But, as luck would have it, that's when our Porsche group got stuck behind a gigantic road-striping truck. The universe runs on Karma, and all of us knew immediately that this was payback for our too-quick drive through the open farmlands. We slowed down again, this time to just 12 mph. We poked along at this speed for the next thirty-five minutes on our way to Silverton. My daughter joked “Don't worry Dad, they're spraying white paint, and your Porsche's white! So, if they get some on your car, no problem.”

There is something to be said for being trapped in a car together.

My daughter lives in Portland, and I do see her fairly regularly, but not as much as I'd like. It always seems as if we only talk about our general day-to-day existence. It's difficult to find the time, and the occasion, to bring up topics with a more profound meaning. But being here, stuck in traffic behind a line-painting truck, that opportunity presented itself. We had a substantive conversation about her hopes, dreams, and plans for the future. I am again grateful to ORPCA for providing the line-painting truck.

Our merry band of wanderers finally made it to the drive's final destination - Silverton. After noticing that all the on-street parking was filled, we suddenly came upon a wide-open asphalt



(Above Restaurant at the park. (Right) The Gallon House restaurant at the end of the drive.

lot, so we quickly parked our cars there - and headed for the restaurant. Happily, lady luck was still with us. A woman from our group came running back, to tell the club that this particular lot was not for parking cars. What it was for, and why it was empty, we never found out. She went on to say that it carried a \$100 fine, and a tow truck charge if we were caught. You never saw so many Porsches move so quickly.

The Gallon House was not expecting us, and certainly not in such numbers. They seemed a bit miffed at first, but then as the gravity of the situation sank in, they became much more accommodating. The staff originally told my daughter that it would be a long wait. But they must have wrapped their minds around the problem, because we got served fairly quickly. Allegra had the Portobello mushroom sandwich, and I got a simple plate of Mac & Cheese - not wanting to make things any more difficult for the cooks. As I sat at the table chatting with my daughter, I also listened to the others in the group speak eloquently about their machines. The engines, exhaust, tires, fuel management systems - it was all in play. How does a car company inspire such devotion from mere transportation? Porsche inspires people to be more than they are, to reach higher. Is it a combination of technological superiority and



emotional excitement? And if it is, where does it come from? If other companies could bottle that, they would make a fortune. Whatever the 'secret sauce' is, it gets into your blood. I could never go back to driving just a normal car. If someday I can't drive a Porsche anymore, I think I'll just take the bus.

As we left the restaurant, I asked my daughter if she wanted me to sign us up for any more Porsche club drives. She said "Yes, in about a decade. It'll take that long for this to wear off."

Nice,' I thought, 'Mission accomplished.'

One final note, in case anybody's still reading this. I have a great tip for you. On the way back to Oregon City (the non-longer way) Allegra and I went again to Molalla. Las Delicias Bakery has the freshest doughnuts, Mexican pastries, coffee, and cakes in the area. My wife would have scolded me if I hadn't returned home with some. ■