

Route 66: The Drive Home

ARTICLE AND PHOTOS BY ARNON KASETER

Waking up one morning in mid-December, I grabbed my phone and started deleting junk emails. One subject line caught my eye—an email from America's Automotive Trust titled *"The Drive Home Route 66 Kicks Off January 3rd..."*

I opened it.

The Drive Home VII: Route 66—a once-in-a-lifetime cross-country drive celebrating the 100th anniversary of the legendary Route 66. I scrolled a little further and saw the words "Sign up to make the drive with us" in red. I didn't think twice—I signed up. I remember thinking, my 911 is perfect for this long trip! With little time to prepare, I had the car inspected and threw my clothes in the back. My 911 has just enough space for both of us.

I made my way to Santa Monica to join America's Automotive Trust and the National Route

66 Centennial Commission. When I left Lynnwood at 4 a.m., it was foggy, but the rest of the drive went smoothly. I went straight to meet the drivers and crew of the nine official cars at a reception held at the Santa Monica Ice Rink.

The next day was the formal kickoff at Mel's Diner, hosted by America's Automotive Trust, the Route 66 Centennial Commission, and the Detroit Auto Show. I was thrilled to meet Mr. Steve Saleen

at the kickoff. With Santa Monica police cruisers escorting us out of town, he joined us for a short drive. I picked up my wife at the Ontario airport near our second stop.



Driving Route 66 from Santa Monica to Chicago was unforgettable. I loved every bit of it. It was wonderful to see America the way it felt a long time ago; small towns, open roads, and a slower pace of life. Along the way, we found interesting stores and unique places that exist only on this route and met genuine people everywhere we stopped.

Kansas has only 13 miles of Route 66, but it still stands out. One memorable stop was Gearhead Curios by Aaron Perry—especially his famous restroom.

This is just the tip of the iceberg. Every stop was fun and interesting, with excitement building from one point to the next. Route 66 isn't just a drive; it's a reminder of what made traveling across America special.

We met "Big Mike" in Seligman, AZ. A gentle, genuine, and proud Route 66 promoter and owner of a local retail store. Seligman, AZ also inspired the movie *Cars*, a small town bypassed by progress, saved by the people who refused to let it fade away.

A stop at the Rolla Visitor Center in Missouri was especially impressive. Everyone there made us feel incredibly welcome with an official reception.

Most of the "privateers" drove only portions of the route, but only two cars completed the drive from end to end.

Our trip ended on another sunny day in Chicago, in front of the Art Institute. We were happy to have made it without any issues, but also a little sad, knowing we would miss the people we met along the way. Making so many new friends and visiting memorable places along the Mother Road was a big part of my experience.

I would definitely do this type of journey again in my Porsche.. ■

