

Santa Fe 2013

Porsche 356 Registry West Coast Holiday

By Sean Cridland

**Photos by Sean Cridland,
Dennis Chamberlain, and John Hearn**

Published in

Porsche 356 Registry

34-7

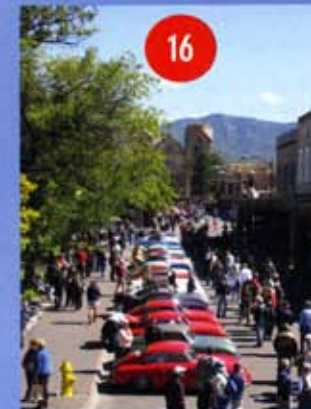
November 2013

Porsche 356 Registry

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Volume 37, Number 4 • November / December 2013



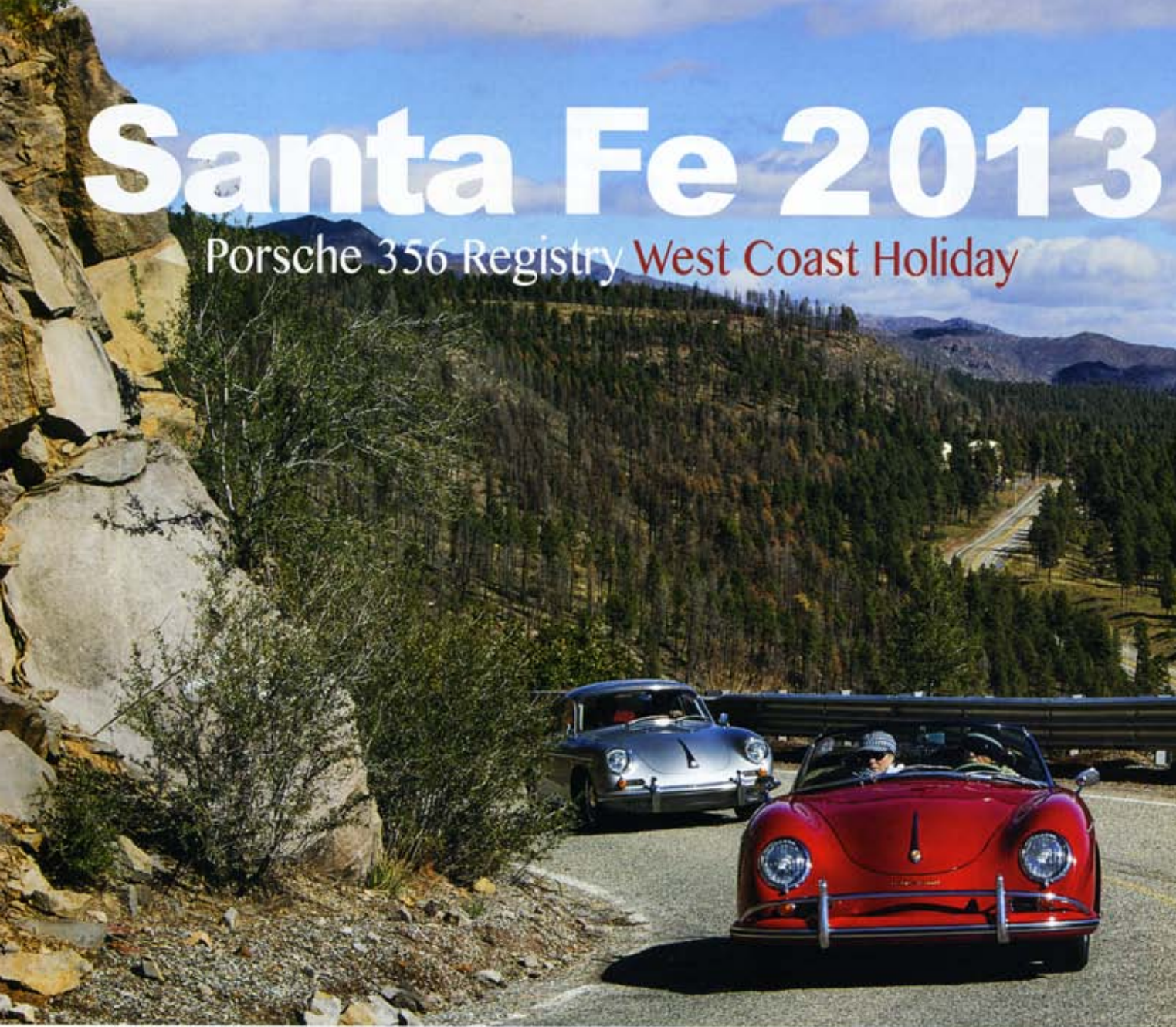
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Top page: Continental divide between the Adriatic and Black Seas.
Alex Bollner photo on the Bernina Pass at Lago Bianco near St. Moritz.
Cover: Red Rock Canyon road, near Masonville, Colorado. David T. Dennis.

Santa Fe 2013

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Just getting to the Holiday provided some gorgeous scenery, no matter which direction you came from. And the drive-outs gave registrants a chance to see as much New Mexico beauty (and weather) as they wanted.

By Sean Cridland

Photos by
Dennis Chamberlain
John Hearn
Sean Cridland

Santa Fe, New Mexico is one of the oldest towns in North America; founded by the Spanish in 1610, but with its Native American roots going back to “time immemorial.” Its flavor has since developed through the Spanish colonial days, a wild-west territory era and on to its gradual development from railroad stop days and eventually into a world center for the arts, both cultural and contemporary. With a variety of former inhabitants that include Kit Carson, Georgia O’Keefe, D.H. Lawrence, Ansel Adams and current ones that include movie stars and retired industrialists, it somehow still manages to retain its local flavor and lives up to its name as “the city different”.

Say what you will about the magnitude of Santa Fe’s artistic and colorful character, come October 9th through the 12th of this year, its color was added to—tenfold—when the 356 Registry crowd showed up for their West Coast Holiday, Old Route 66 edition. The Zia 356 Club

of New Mexico, a small team led by Jim Puckett and wife Patti were ready with an amazing array of tours and events that almost defined the words “color,” “panache,” and “brilliance.”

Participants were welcomed to registration at the famed La Fonda hotel, just off the storied Santa Fe Plaza on Wednesday, and treated to a warm greeting from the New Mexico team, augmented by several volunteers from around the country and some from far beyond its shores. Felix and Jeannie Macaluso from California, volunteer registrars for the event, came to help out with the on-site process thus ensuring a smooth entry for participants. Norman May and his wife Alison came all the way from Australia to help hand out goodie-bags and beautiful holiday fleece vests to make sure everyone was warm enough in the cool autumn air, chilled even further by Santa Fe’s altitude of 7200 feet above sea level (more on that later). Everyone seemed happy to be in attendance, to visit, and to help.

Drive-outs and lots more to do

Once participants were checked in and goodie-bags were in hand, a wide array of options were available including drive outs, shopping at the goodie store, and sight-seeing in Santa Fe. On Thursday, folks had opportunities to view the International Balloon Fiesta’s Special Shapes event and attend tech sessions on topics ranging from Santa Fe art to “Your 356 Porsche: a hobby, an asset, an estate”. Several driving tours were offered to the local ski area, Chimayo, the Sandia Crest, Tent Rocks and Cimarron.

The drive outs were planned as both leader-guided and self-guided in order to give participants the option of being in a group drive or heading out at their own pace. Sometimes finding one’s way out of Santa Fe can be a challenge and no doubt some got lost before reaching their destination. But the Land of Enchantment is known for supplying lost souls with unusual treasures, so there were few complaints. Of course the famous New Mexico weather contributed to the, shall we say, character of each of the tours. While the state is generally known for its dry climate and crystal-clear skies, on Thursday some of that other weather moved in (presumably from out of state), meaning that some of the tours encountered morning frost, rain, sleet, and even a little snow. While comments were heard about the inevitable leaks and foggy windshields, everyone was the better for a little adventurous driving. It made the beautiful weather during the weekend even more appreciated - even spectacular.

The second story parking garage of the La Fonda hotel was a meeting place of sorts throughout the Holiday as that is where many of the 356s were parked during the event. Drivers spent hours polishing and re-polishing their cars prior to the Saturday concours. It was a great place for enthusiasts to take photos of their favorite models and just ooh and ahh over the vintage cars. The informal social happy hour events took place each evening on the rooftop Terrazza of the La Fonda directly across from the St. Francis Cathedral and the Institute of American Indian Arts, both iconic landmarks reminding the participants of the history and culture of old New Mexico. Participants were encouraged to venture into town for their own unique dining experiences among the hundreds of local and global cuisines offered in “the city different”.

Friday dawned bright and early and was jam-packed with drive-outs and an autocross event. It had snowed lightly at high elevations the night before and the morning drive out to the Santa Fe Ski Resort was chilly but full of the warm colors of fall. The aspen trees with their golden hue highlighted by the sun contrasted with the dark pines and white snowy blanket that covered the hillsides. It was a sight to see all of the brightly colored Porsches glistening in the autumn light as they wound their way up the mountain.

Heading north of town was another driveout tour through the Jemez mountains, the Valles Caldera, the Walatowa Pueblo and a stop for lunch at the Zia 356 group’s favorite meeting place in Bernalillo, The Range Cafe. A hearty group of 356s started out from Santa Fe to Los Alamos and up and over the east side of the Jemez mountains. The sun was high and the air was crisp with many convertibles in the line-up, their drivers and passengers bundled up for warmth. Other tours that day included the Chimayo Sanctuary, Cimarron, and Black Mesa Drive.

At the same time, the autocross event was taking place in the parking lot of the local Chevrolet dealer in Santa Fe. A total of 40 participants had registered, however only 13 showed up for the actual event, probably because of the beautiful weather taking them off to other destinations, but maybe because of the anticipated fierce competition! The day ended early with Randy Kaplin taking the fastest time of the day (39.07) in his 1956 Pre-A black Speedster and matching black helmet. He beat out longtime Zia 356 ace hot-shoe Joe Almers in his ‘56 A coupe, who had a time of 40.62. Joe’s time belies the finish that might have been; he’d actually driven



Hagerty insurance provided doggie... er, registrant bags. Other major sponsors of the event included Porsche AG/Porsche Cars North America; Porsche of Albuquerque; Stoddard NLA; European Collectibles; Dr. Ohira’s Probiotics (www.essentialformulas.com); 356 Carburetor Rescue; American Lifestyle magazine; John Rippel USA, Porsche Design Dealer; and 356 Registry.

The registration process started with volunteers Dave Stinchcomb (left) and Jeannie Macaluso.



La Fonda’s parking ramp provided a dry place for concours prep.



Sunsets from the LaFonda patio showed off that unique New Mexico light and architecture.



Holiday chairman Jim Puckett moderated a panel of experts on value and restoration, including from left, Chuck Nelson, Dick Brumme, Bill Edwards, Jim Liberty, Jeff Trask and Jim Kellogg.



Autocross had only a few entrants but did not lack in enthusiasm.



Friday at sunrise was a perfect time to see the balloon festival.



At over 8,000 feet the weather could be anything, including snow.

a faster time, but knocked a cone out of its box and was penalized for the gaffe. Oh, what might have been. Event chair Bob Blackwell noted that all in all, it was a good day with autocrossers leaving the parking lot with huge smiles on their faces and many scores to settle at the next Holiday!

An early end to Friday events just left more time to prep for the people's choice concours to be held the following day on the Santa Fe Plaza. The logistics in pulling off the concours was a Herculean effort by event chair Garry Wolf and his team of hard-working and enthusiastic volunteers. With over 250 356s needing to be placed in specific locations on and around the plaza streets a detailed plan (including staging times and gate locations) based on car models was circulated to registrants in the months leading up to the event. Like clockwork, 356s began pulling out of the La Fonda hotel garage and lining up at their designated gates for access to their assigned street. By 10 a.m. all cars were parked and ready for show in the people's choice concours event. What an event it was!

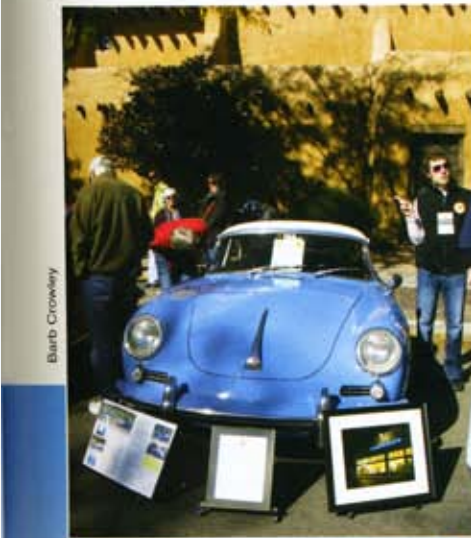
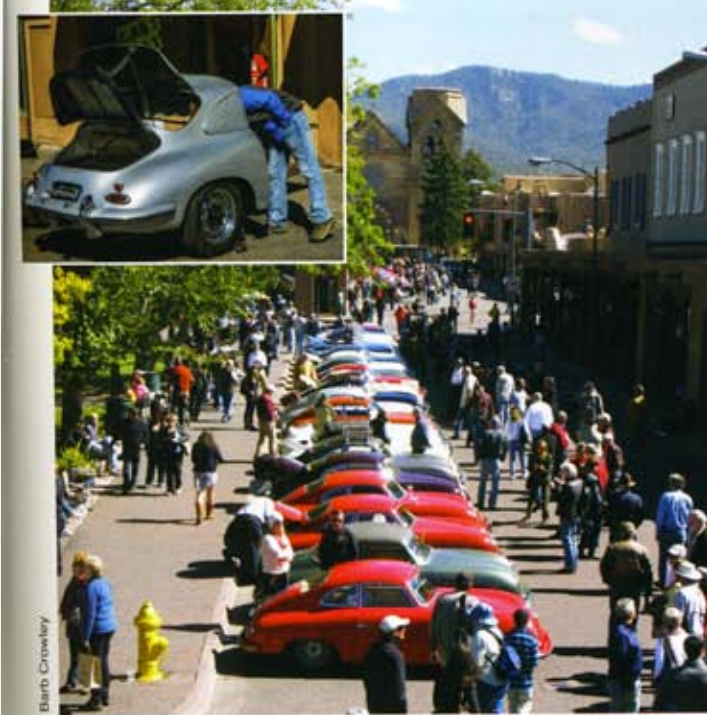
Just about every color and model of 356 that has ever existed found a place under the autumn Santa Fe sun with one of the most spectacular car shows New Mexico has ever seen. Santa Fe locals and visitors turned in droves to make the event a true spectacle. The fans and admirers seemed charmed by the vintage cars, the colors, and the fact they could get up close, take photos, and talk to the owners about their beauties. There was a lane of Porsches near the Palace of the Governors representing a timeline of six decades of Porsches, from Stan Gold's 1952 America Roadster to a 2005 Carrera GT. All said, with the beauty of the cars, the aroma of the food carts, the street artists and musicians, the Native Americans selling their wares at the Palace of the Governors, the warm autumn sun, and the deep, deep blue New Mexico sky, the Concours was a smashing success in everyone's memory book. Porsche AG rep Paul Gregor—who attends club events all over the world—added that it was one of the best he's ever seen.

As is the case with everything good and wonderful, all things come to a close. This time it was in the storied La Fonda banquet hall, preceded by a reception where friends mingled for one last time. Emcee Tommy Thompson led the show with his typical verve and enthusiasm, calling on Jim Puckett to say some final words about the event, thanking sponsors and volunteers and wishing well to all the participants. Resounding applause greeted the announcement that European Collectibles of Costa Mesa had donated the white and red wines for each table. 356 Registry President George Dunn shared his views on the state of the 356 Registry and the success of the event, along with introducing the present members of the Registry board in attendance. Porsche AG Club Coordinator Paul Gregor complimented the Registry and the Zia Club on the quality and spectacle of the event, from day one through the concours. He noted that Registry members were important ambassadors for the brand.

Then it was on to the awards. For this banquet, the organizers agreed that dinners of this sort can drag on and on, so rather than have winners come to the front and receive their awards individually, they were announced by Garry Wolf to applause and came later to pick up their hardware. Trophies were lovely pieces of pottery hand made by famed local potter Vangie Tafoya.

Garry had spent weeks wrangling city officials through a difficult process, gathering his army of volunteers, developing a parking plan, getting the ballots out, collecting them, and overseeing a collection of 250 cars, their owners, and the huge turnout of the general public that enjoyed the event. He got a well-deserved round of applause from the group.

Several notables were in the crowd, including former Trans-Am champion Tom Gloy, who was attending his very first 356 West Coast Holiday along with wife Sue. Al Lager, who brought his replica of an Abarth Carrera and was team manager for Bob Hagestad's Trans-Am and IMSA team during the late '60s and '70s



From top Left: Unfortunately, no trophy for best barbecue. 250 356s literally filled the town square - and then some. Lots of interest and advice about engines, as usual, among onlookers. No shortage of Speedsters. Left: Balloting, like the logistics of placing the cars, was well organized, quick and efficient. Far left: George Speed had a nice display of items with his cabriolet, which his father bought new.



West Coast Holiday trophies are handmade, one of a kind, carved clay pots, acquired directly from the famed Native American potter, Vangie Tafoya, of the Jemez Pueblo. The pots are mounted on indigenous pieces of rubble stone.

