

Outlaws

Ride the Mother Road

By SO OLD

(transcribed by Barbara Crowley)



This page from top: A stop along old Route 66. Hualapai ladies admire our lines in Peach Springs. The burros in Oatman liked us too.

Opposite from top: Ron Clarke's B Cabrio at a colorful roadside stop at the General Store in Hackberry, AZ. As the signs indicate, we were welcomed everywhere we went. A covered spot for the night is appreciated, even if it wasn't heated. One of our group confers with an elder at the General Store.

I'm a 55 year old 356

with a six volt "ticker." I'm not as spry as I used to be; at these advanced years, don't my "people" realize that driving me over 2000 miles in four weeks is pretty demanding? That's what they did in September and October this year. They also entered me in four car shows expecting me to do as well as younger Porsches that are garage queens. What were they thinking? If I had my druthers, I'd rather be on the road with all my buddies. I had that opportunity when I hit the road for the Javelina 100.

This is an annual touring event organized by people belonging to a 356 club called the Arizona Outlaws. The credo of this club is "no officers, no by-laws, no rules, no dues and no one's in charge of anything." What these guys *do* know is how to have a good time. Like me, they prefer spending time on the road.

The Javelina 100 adventure began on October 10th around sunrise when I met up with two other 356s from my home town of Tucson. We rendezvoused north of Wickenburg, Arizona, with about twenty five more 356s. Our destination was the AVI Resort and Casino in Laughlin, Nevada.

After removing the luggage out of me (why do my people need to pack so much stuff?) at the hotel, they parked me overnight in a covered garage along with fifty of my old friends, who had traveled mostly from the southwest but some had come from as far away as Texas and Seattle. Del Johnston's red Coupe was there along with Len Erie's blue "B," Dick Smith's '59 black sun-roof Coupe, and the omnipresent green Speedster of King and Carol Clemons. As usual, I was the oldest one in attendance so I got a little extra deserved respect from my peers. (Too bad you humans don't seem to do the same for your seniors.)

While our people whiled away the evening at the bar sharing stories of their travels and mechanical problems encountered over the past year, we 356s were telling our own stories in a silent Germanic language heard only by other 356s. We all had fun gossiping and telling each other about our adventures with our people since we'd seen each other at last year's Javelina.

Early Saturday morning, we all got fed at the local gas station. We congregated back at the garage and could hardly contain ourselves while the humans had a driver's meeting and spoke about speed limits, Route 66, stops, and the "Whining Swine." (Whoever complains/whines about anything would be given a small stuffed pink pig. The pig would be transferred to other whiners throughout the day. The entrant holding the pig at the end of the day would get the dreaded "Whining Swine" award.)

The excitement of the drive to come was electric; fifty of us friends all together again. What fun! It made me feel young and frisky. Off we went on the Javelina 100 tour, this year a nostalgic trip on Route 66, the "Mother Road."

The first leg of the trip was through a dramatic desert mountain terrain. The road was truly a "Porsche Road," a two-lane twisty, scenic highway with a lot of switchbacks allowing us to look at each other glistening in the sun as we snaked around all the curves. The twisty road led us into the small rustic town of Oatman. This old town is a throwback to the wild, wild, west - a perfect place for Outlaws. Oatman is renowned for two things. First, Clark Gable and Carol Lombard spent their honeymoon here. Second, there are burros that come out of the hills to wander the streets! They are very tame and are allowed access into many of the stores lining the main street. What a sight to see burros and us 356s together. (They were so close that I was fearful of getting "kicked on Route 66".)

The next attraction was the Route 66/Art Power House Museum in Kingman, Arizona. From there, we continued to the historic Hackberry General Store and on to Peach Springs where there was a lunch stop. Hualapai children in native costumes danced and sang while the Outlaws ate, and elders of the tribe were outside having their pictures taken with us 356s!

The tour continued on to the final destination of Winslow. No one stopped to stand on the corner in Winslow, Arizona - it was too windy and cold. But we all made it to La Posada Hotel, a grand old hotel that is famous for its architecture by Mary Colter and its Harvey Girl waitresses who served the affluent people touring the southwest by rail a century ago.

A final gathering of the faithful was held Saturday evening in the grand meeting room. The wine flowed, stories were told, and prizes were awarded. There was a four-way tie for the winner of the Don Cates annual trivia quiz. To determine a winner, each contender had to perform the Eagle's song "Take It Easy." American Idol it was not. In the end, it was my people who were voted the winners. Their prize was a 2009 Outlaw calendar.

My people feasted on a gourmet meal and went off to a warm bed while my 356 buddies and I shivered through the cold night. Our slumber was often interrupted by the loud clickety-clack of the trains passing behind the hotel. When the sun came up, all of our people "Saddled up" for their return home. We were a little sad to see all our friends leaving, since we had had such great fun together. I know that I'll be seeing them and many more friends in 2009 at the West Coast Holiday in Sedona, Arizona, when the Outlaws ride again! 🚗



Photos by Kent Buttermann, Mike Wroughton and Mary Jane Oring.



Kerry Smith

About the "Author"

"SO OLD" is a 1953 Coupe owned by Dennis and Barb Crowley. She resides in Tucson, Arizona where the Crowleys purchased her for \$2975. in 1986. She was rust free but pretty "rough." There were birds' nests and grass in the engine and the naugahide headliner hung down almost a foot. But she had all her parts and was perfect for a "driver". After six months of restoration, she "debuted" at the 1987 356 Registry Holiday in Estes Park, Colorado, winning her class. Two years later she won the People's Choice award at the Holiday in Sedona, Arizona against over 100 other 356s.

You can find this old timer on the road a lot. She is driven regularly on tours and to local and national events. The Crowleys have added 62,000 miles on the odometer during the past 22 years. Though showing her age, "SO OLD" still gets many compliments and is a crowd favorite at car shows. Her warm crème-beige paint, tinted glass, Carrera-style louvers on the engine lid (keeping things cooler in the Arizona heat,) full corduroy interior and ultrasuede headliner set this Outlaw apart from other 356s.

Something most people notice right away are the 195-50/16 tires, and the ever-confusing custom wheels. They are made from the centers of original 16 inch wheels welded into the "outers" of Ford Duellie truck rims - reversed. The valve stem was moved to the new outside and the centers were painted so as to not make it too hot-rod looking.